

HYPERMNESTRA:

OR,

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LOVE *in* TEARS.

A

TRAGEDY.

By ROBERT OWEN, Esq;

*Una de multis, face nuptiali
Digna, perjurum fuit in Parentem
Splendide Mendax, & in omne Virgo
Nobilis ævum. Horat.*

THE SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N :

Printed for BERNARD LINTOT, between the
two Temple-Gates in Fleet-street. 1722.

HIPPEASTRIS

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PROLOGUE,

Intended to be Spoken by Mrs. Porter
in Man's Cloaths.

As some young Sinner, whom an early Fault
Has to the awful Seat of Justice brought,
With down-cast Eyes, and trembling Feet appears,
While the dread Presence of his Judge he fears,
Yet pleads his Youth, and unexperienc'd Years:
Our guilty Author, whose Misgivings read
His hast'ning Doom, has nothing else to plead;
He owns his Fault, yet hopes you will excuse
The feeble Efforts of a Virgin Muse:
She's rude, 'tis true, unpractis'd in her Art,
But modest, and with Blushes woes the Heart,
She can no Charms, but Modesty, impart.
But if, because unknown, she must despair;
Yet one poor Virgin for another spare,
And with your Smiles crown my officious Pray'r.
So your Petitioner may grateful prove;
Kindness return for Kindness, Love for Love.
But——let th' ill-natur'd Critick have a Care;
If he but frown——to fight he must prepare,
And two Nights hence resolve to meet me——here.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

DANAUS, King of *Argos*.

ÆGYPTUS, his Brother, King of *Egypt*.

LYNCEUS, *Egyptus* his Son.

HIPPANAX, *Danaus* his General.

Priest of *Juno*.

W O M E N.

HYPERMNESTRA, *Danaus* his Daughter.

ANTHELEA, her Sister.

Ghosts.

Furies and Fiends.

Guards.

Soldiers.

The SCENE, *ARGOS*.

TIME, the same with that of the
Presentation.



HYPERMNESTRA:

OR,

LOVE *in* TEARS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SCENE *Hypermnestra's Anti-chamber.*

Enter Hypermnestra with a Dagger. [Thunder.

HYPERMNESTRA.



E righteous Pow'rs, what dismal Fears pursue us,

When once we deviate from the Paths of Virtue?

How oft have I, at later Hours than this,

Walkt here, by Innocence alone secur'd?

Yet now, methinks, each Step I take, some Fiend

With hideous Jaws stands ready to devour me. [Thunder.

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Each Time the Voice of Heav'n displays its Terror,
 I quake, as if the Pangs of Death had seiz'd me.
 Few Hours ago I might have died with Honour,
 And been possess'd e'er this of Life eternal;
 But Peace and I are now for ever parted,
 And Horror grows each Moment more familiar.

[Groans heard within]

Hark! hark! by Heav'n the bold Assassination
 Is now begun. Each unrelenting Sister,
 Arm'd with a cruel Resolution, plunges
 A fatal Dagger in her Husband's Bosom.
 Ha! where art thou? Wilt thou, the first in Years,
 Be last in Action? wretched *Hypermnestra*!
 How hard's thy Fate, that, whatsoe'er thou dost,
 Involves thee in a sad Necessity
 Of closing with inevitable Ruin?
 Some piteous God instruct me what to do!
 Shall I, forgetting *Hymen's* sacred Bands,
 Which to my *Lynceus* have so lately join'd me,
 With savage Hands invade his precious Life,
 And pierce his faithful Heart? Forbid it, Love.
 Audacious Wretch! shall a fond Passion then [Thunder.
 Cancel thy Duty to a tender Father,
 And make thee violate thy sacred Oath,
 And urge the Fury of avenging Heav'n?
 Oh! *Lynceus*! *Lynceus*! could my Death preserve thee,
 I'd sail a willing Sacrifice this moment,
 That thou might'st be assur'd how well I love thee:
 But now Obedience to a Father's Will,
 And awful Rev'rence to th' immortal Gods,
 Force me at last to give th' unwilling Blow,

[Going] [Thunder.

And

LOVE in TEARS.

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And killing thee, to taste a double Death.
But can I do it? Let me go resolv'd,
Lest too much Pity frustrate my Intentions.
Already thrice I've rais'd the fatal Ponyard,
Yet ev'n in Sleep his lovely Smiles disarm'd me,
And thrice my unexperienc'd Hand has fail'd.

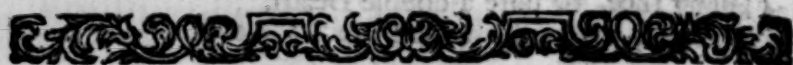
[More Groans.]

Again! There *Idmon* fell, that wondrous Warrior.
O my *Anthelea*! O my dearest Sister!
Can thy soft Heart so soon forget Compassion?
Art thou before me too? I'll stay no longer.
No; no; I'll bathe my Steel as deep in Blood
As any of ye all, my glorious Sisters. [Going.] [Thunder.
See! See! methinks my bleeding Hero lies
Gasping for Breath, and calling *Hypermnestra*.
Ah! a pale Damp o'erspreads his lovely Face;
Help! help! he's dead: my *Lynceus* is no more.
Who? who art thou that with unhallow'd Hands
Hast dar'd to violate that sacred Life?
Ah! what, a Woman too? yes, doating Wretch,
'Tis thou thy self that art the barb'rous Murd'ress,
'Tis *Hypermnestra* kills her noble Husband.
Support me, Heav'n; I cannot bear the Thought:
It shall not be: Die Sisters, Father, all,
Burn *Argos*, perish Nature——
E'er *Lynceus* fall by *Hypermnestra*'s Hand,

A S

SCENE

Thunder.
And



SCENE II.

Enter Lynceus to her. She conceals the Dagger.

Lync. Oh! my Soul's Comfort! welcom to my Arms.
[Embracing her.]

I'm overjoy'd to find thee safe from Danger.
But 'twas unkindly done to leave me thus
Alone, unguarded by thy Innocence,
To all the Terrors of a dreadful Night.
Oh! *Hypermnestra*, I have known those Horrors,
Whose Image wou'd affright thy tender Soul.
For (wouldst thou think it?) in my troubled Dreams
Methought thy lovely Form drew near my Bed,
Arm'd with those Glories that first pierc'd my 'Breast.
When lo! as I endeavour'd to embrace thee,
A colder Weapon had transfix'd my Heart.
I started, and awak'd; then threw my Arms
Around the Bed, expecting there to find thee,
And by a sweeter Death unfold the Vision:
But oh! no tender Wife, no *Hypermnestra*
Was there to second my transported Wishes.
Nothing but Horrors entertain'd my Soul.
Aloud the Gods in Indignation spoke,
As if they meant to rend the sinful World.
Then hideous Groans, and doleful Lamentations
Successively my wond'ring Ears invaded.
I thought I likewise heard a Voice like thine,
Help, help, it cry'd: Sure 'twas not all a Dream.
Ha! thou look'st pale! and Horror overwhelms thee.
Speak, I conjure thee speak, what is the Cause?

Hypermn.

Hyperm. Oh! my dear Lord! endeavour not to know
Such things as will disturb your Peace for ever.
Fly instantly, and save your precious Life,
For here you are not safe one moment longer.

Lyn. Ha! say'st thou? pr'ythee don't torment me thus!
Speak more at large, and ease my lab'ring Soul.

Hyperm. Oh! fly, and live.

Lyn. Nay, then thou dost not love me.
How have I forc'd thee to suspect my Honesty,
And keep thy Secrets from my faithful Bosom?

Hyperm. Not love thee! witness, ye all-seeing Pow'rs,
If any, but your selves, I prize before him.
Yes, yes, my Lord, if that would ease your Sorrow,
You soon should know the cause of my Concern;
Nay, view the place that lodges all my Secrets.
But should I shew thee all, I fear, my *Lynceus*,
Thy Life would end before the fatal Story.
Once more, I tell thee, thou may'st fall this instant.

Lyn. Why, *Hypermnestra*, I've been long a Soldier,
And dare meet Death in the most dreadful Form.

[*She weeps.*]

By Heav'n, she weeps! nay, then by all that's sacred,
I will not move, 'till thou hast told me all.

Hyperm. Oh! *Lynceus*!

Lyn. Speak: by *Hymen's* sacred Bands,
By our past Loves, and ev'ry soft Endearment;
By that dear Hand, which but this Night thou gav'st me;
Speak, I entreat thee. ———

[*As he lays hold on her Hand he sees the Dagger.*]

Ha! what's here? a Dagger?

Good Heav'n preserve her! sure thou could'st not leave me.

[*Strikes it out of her Hand.*]

Hyperm.

12 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

Hyperm. Oh!

Lyn. Out with it.

Hyperm. I will. But you must promise
You will not kill me.

Lyn. Thou canst not think I will.

Hyperm. I'm sure I have deserv'd it, if you do:

Nay, I could meet it too; for that must ease me.

But say you will not utterly detest me,

(For that were worse ten thousand times than dying.)

Nor rase me wholly out of your Affections,

But still retain some Kindness for your Wife,

And leave her room for a sincere Repentance;

And I'll be satisfied, and tell you all:

For oh! my Lord, I dare not ask your Love.

Lyn. What means my Life?

Hyperm. But you must swear you will not.

Lyn. Unkind! but I will swear. [*Kneels.*] Ye awful Pow'rs,

Who view the dark Recesses of the Soul,

And, long before, discern its Purposes,

If e'er I prove less kind to *Hypermmestra*,

Nay, if my Love encrease not ev'ry moment,

And rise still higher, till it know no Bounds,

Pour all your Plagues on my devoted Head,

Diseases, Infamy, and meagre Want

Attend me to the gloomy Gates of Death:

And, after that, eternal Horror seize me,

And restless Furies still torment my Soul.

[*Rises.*]

Hyperm. Hear me too, Heaven: [*Kneels.*] And, if thou
canst, forgive

My past Transgression. But if e'er again

My Thoughts prove Traytors to my dearest Lord,

May all those Plagues he call'd upon his Head,

Descend

Descend with double Violence on mine.
 Nay, yet to make my Misery more perfect,
 May he prove perjur'd, and ne'er love me more.
 Now I will tell thee, but be sure remember
 Thy sacred Vow. Thou wilt?

Lyn. I will, by Heav'n.

Hyperm. Seest thou that Dagger?

Lyn. Yes: but cannot guess

To what dire use so tender Hands could put it.

Hyperm. I meant to kill thee with it.

Lyn. Pry'thee Peace.

Why dost thou trifle thus? didst thou not say
 That thou would'st tell me all?

Hyperm. I do.

Lyn. No more.

I know thou only try'st how well I love thee.

Why dost thou doubt it? sure thou couldst not think

That I'd believe thee? No: I know thy Goodness,

And tender Nature better, than to dream

That thou couldst e'er be guilty of such Baseness.

Hyperm. My Fears were just: I thought thou wouldst
 abhor me.

Lyn. Why dost thou talk thus?

Hyperm. By all that's ill, I've said

Nothing but Truth. I thought to murder thee

With that——— [Pointing to the Dagger.

Lyn. Indeed I never gave you cause.

Hyperm. Oh no! 'tis that which adds to my Affliction.

But think not that my Purposes proceeded

From any cruel Principle within me:

But Rev'rence to a Father and the Gods.

Lyn. A Father and the Gods! what dost thou mean?

Hyperm.

14 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

Hyperm. Last Night by *Danaus* his dread Command,
Who threaten'd Death to her that disobey'd,
His wretched Daughters took a fatal Oath,
To kill their Husbands e'er the Morning's Dawn.

Lyn. Unheard-of Villany! If this be true,
The Gods had reason to proclaim their Fury.
These, these were then the Groans that fill'd my Ears,
The dying Out-cries of my murder'd Brothers.
'Twas well my Royal Father was not here,
Oh! how 'twould have oppress'd his aged Heart
To see his Children barbarously butcher'd!
Perfidious King! was this the solemn League?
This the concluded Peace? I cannot bear it.
A noble Fire runs thro' my gen'rous Veins,
Which nothing but the Tyrant's Blood can quench,
His Daughters too.——Where? where?

[Going off distractedly.]

Hyperm. Hold, *Lynceus*, stay.

Lyn. Off, let me go, thou Fury.

Hyperm. I've deserv'd this.

Lyn. Ha! 'tis my Wife! my tender *Hypermnestra*:
Why should she suffer for her Sisters' Crimes?
Canst thou forgive my Rashness?

Hyperm. I expected
To see thee thus transported. But alas!
What canst thou do? I know thy Courage well,
That nothing can exceed it, but thy Love.
Oh! hear thy Wife: Surrounded by his Guards
The King's secure. Why wilt thou fall a Sacrifice
To his Desires? Was it for this I sav'd thee?
Provok'd the Gods, and disobey'd a Father?
Is't not enough that all thy Brothers fell,
Unless thou too expose thy precious Life,

And

LOVE in TEARS. H 15

'And lose all hopes of prosperous Revenge?
Oh! think on that.

Lyn. I do, my lovely Oracle.
By Heav'n this Hour I'll to my Army fly,
And fetch Revenge. Yes, my unhappy Brothers,
To Morrow's Sun shall testify my Love. [Going.]

Hyperm. Farewel. May all the Gods protect my Husband

Lyn. Ha! shall I leave my tender loving Wife,
To all the Rage of a revengeful Father?
Ungrateful *Lynceus*! was't for this she sav'd thee,
Provok'd the Gods, and disobey'd a Father?
What's mine, and all my Brothers' Lives to that?

Hyperm. What shall I say? For Heaven's sake stay no longer.

Me let my Father load with galling Fetters,
For taking Pity on a wretched Husband.
Or let him to *Numidia* banish me,
As long as thou art safe, I must be happy.

Lyn. [Pausing.] It must be so. No, *Hypermanestra*, no;
Thou must not think to conquer me in Love.

Too well thou hast shewn thy Tenderness already,
In hazarding thy precious Life for me.

Shall I then, who so long have slighted Death,

And courted Danger in the dusty Field,

Only to purchase transitory Glory,

Decline it now in such a noble Cause,

Where Love and Honour lead the glorious Way?

[Laying hold of his Sword.]

Thou old Companion of my better Fortune,

Be once more faithful to thy dying Master,

And give my Love that Life thou tak'st from me.

[Offers to stab himself.]

Hyperm.

16 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

Hyperm. And I, my Lord, am now prepar'd to follow,
[Holding up the Dagger.]

For without thee Life would be worse than Death.

Lyn. Hold, I conjure thee, hold, and I will live.

[Staying her Hand.]

Who knows what happy Fate may yet attend us?

Leave now, my Loyal Bride, thy Father's Palace,

And fly with me for Succour to the Army.

Hyperm. Alas! my Lord, should I attend you thither,
Suspicious Eyes wou'd soon betray us both.

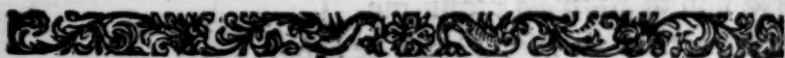
Lyn. Then thou shalt follow me.

Hyperm. My Lord, I will.

Lyn. At *Juno's* Temple I'll expect thy coming.

Till then farewell, thou best of Wives. [Exit Lynceus.]

Hyperm. Farewel.



SCENE III.

Hypermnestra.

Hyperm. At *Juno's* Temple I'll expect thy coming,
'Twas an ill Omen sure! that sacred Place
Was Yesterday most shamefully prophan'd
By the unhallow'd Marriage of our Family.
But I have kept my Matrimonial Vow.
And O! I hope once more to meet him there
Farewel, familiar Walls, I shall no more
Know happy Days and peaceful Nights within ye.
Adieu, fell Sisters, and Blood-thirsty *Danaus*,
For after that I would not call thee Father. [Enter Danaus.]
He's here, by Heav'n: unfortunate Delay!

SCENE



SCENE IV.

Danaus, Priest, Hypermnestra.

Dan. How fares our Royal Daughter? What? in Tears?

Priest. Sir, can you blame her to lament the Loss
Of a young Husband on the Wedding Night?
Had you been forc'd, my Liege, to leave *Moneſa*,
Your beſt lov'd Wife, ſo ſoon, you'd ſure have wept.

Dan. 'Tis true, I lov'd my dear *Moneſa* more
Than ever tender Husband lov'd a Wife.
But yet had *Belus* his important Safety
Depended on the Iſſue of the Blow,
I think, by Heav'n, I think I cou'd ha' ſlain her,
And born the mighty Malady unmov'd.
But Women are more tender. Is he ſafe? [*To Hyperm.*

Hyperm. I'm ſure he was, my Lord, not long ago.

Dan. Come to thy Father's Arms, my faithful Daughter.
[*Embracing her.*

Hyperm. I hope he is ſo ſtill.

Dan. Art thou not ſure on't?

Hyperm. Heav'n only knows.

Dan. What means my *Hypermneſtra*?

Hyperm. *Lynceus* is fled.

Dan. [*Starting.*] Ha! Fled? Thou ly'eſt: he is not.

Hyperm. Indeed, my Lord, he is.

Dan. Then, perjur'd Wretch,

Take the Reward of thy bold Diſobedience:

Thy Blood ſhall pay for his, by Heav'n it ſhall.

An injur'd Father, and the Gods require it.

[*Going to kill her.*

Priest.

18 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

Priest. Hold, sacred Sir, at my Entreaty spare her.

Dan. Wilt thou presume to make Atonement for her?
Thou, who with damn'd mistaken Policy
Hast led me into this unlucky Villany;
And now expos'd thy Master to Perdition?

Priest. You might ha' spar'd those words; I did my best,
Nor is there Danger of your sacred Life.
I only now entreat you to suspend
Your righteous Fury, till she has repented
Of those black Crimes her Rashness has committed.

Dan. Well: She shall live to ask the Gods Forgiveness;
But while that *Lyncæus* lives, I am not safe.
Give Orders instantly to apprehend him:
And bid my Guards attend.

Priest. I will, my Lord.

[Exit Priest.

[Guards wait without.



SCENE V.

Danaus and Hypermnestra.

Dan. Ungrateful! Dost thou thus reward my Love?
Which of thy Sisters have I been so fond of?
And yet, they all, thro' Sense of their Obedience
And Oath, have well discharg'd their Trust, but thou,
But thou, whom I of all the least suspected.

Hyperm. Oh! hear me, Sir.

Dan. I will not hear thee speak.

Oh! *Hypermnestra*! call to mind the Troubles
I've hitherto sustain'd, and thou wilt own
I need not suffer more. When first in *Egypt*,
While yet we liv'd within my Brother's Court,

He would have join'd our Families in Marriage:
 I, by the Oracle forewarn'd, refus'd
 The fatal Union. For thus spake *Apollo*,
 Beware a Son-in-Law, and thou art happy:
 Yet still he urg'd it: We forsook the Court,
 And underwent the long Fatigue of Travel.
 At last we here arriv'd; and not long after
 Was *Sthenelus* depos'd, and I elected,
 As one descended nobly, King of *Argos*.
 But O! the rigid Hatred of my Brother,
 Remembring still that I refus'd his Offer,
 He sent his Sons with a vast Army hither;
 And charg'd them either to espouse my Daughters,
 Or bring my Head: I, mindful of the Oracle,
 Shun'd the Alliance, and engag'd in War.
 But they prevail'd: I then consented to
 The dreadful Nuptials. Yet I still expected
 A Father's Counsel, and a reverend Oath,
 Might have prevail'd with my obedient Children
 To save a Father—But, it seems, thy Lust [*Angrily.*
 O'er-rul'd thy Duty to the Gods, and me.
 Was that a Daughter? But thou shalt not go unpunish'd:
 To-morrow thou shalt die. Be sure she scape not.
 [*To the Guards.*] [*Exit Danaus.*]



SCENE VI.

Hypermnestra.

Hyperm. What strain of Language could express my Woe,
 Were all the Gods as cruel as my Father?

But

20 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

But Heav'n is gracious, and forbears to punish
 Relenting Sinners, who implore its Mercy,
 Methinks a secret Whisper from within
 Excuses my Compassion to my Husband.
 Yet 'tis a strange Surprize to feeble Nature
 To fall in blooming Youth, while circling Blood
 Dances harmonious Measures in our Veins:
 E'er the dull Winter of our Age approaches,
 Or fatal Symptoms of impending Death.
 O! 'tis far easier in the Days of Health,
 With supercilious Gravity to slight
 The Fears of Death, than to encounter it.
 Yet this and more I cou'd sustain with Patience;
 Knew I what Fortune wou'd attend my *Lynceus*,
 Those are the Fears that most oppress my Soul.
 O! if ill Chance shou'd guide their barb'rous Feet
 To that dear Place, where my poor Lord expects me,
 How cou'd I suffer that? I dare not think on't.
 I'll try if I can read away my Cares.
 'Twould be some Comfort to me, could I meet
 A Story something parallel to mine.
 Perhaps I may at last find out a Woman
 That lov'd as well, and suffer'd for her Love
 As much as I do now. For surely she
 Who after Wedlock owns a growing Flame,
 Deserves a place in the Records of Fame.



ACT



ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter Hypermnestra.

HYPERMNESTRA.

IT will not be: I only learn by reading!
 That my Calamity is unparallel'd;
 And, maugre vain Amusements, will be heard.
 Little Afflictions may, like gentle Streams,
 Be soon diverted, or endure a Dam:
 Mine, like a mighty Torrent, scorn Restraint,
 And with impetuous Rage bear down each Obstacle;
 That idly bars their arbitrary Course:
 And thus o'erflow with unexhausted Tears. [Weeps
 Oh! Lynceus! oh! my Husband.



SCENE II.

Enter Lynceus disguis'd.

Hyperm. What art thou,
 That with rude Feet hast dar'd to interfere
 Betwixt an helpless, miserable Woman,
 And her dear Griefs? Must they be banisht too?
 Speak, who? whence art thou?

Lyn.

22 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

Lyn. [*Aside.*] Oh! my Heart weeps Blood
To see her thus——Yet I'll pursue my purpose.
[*To her.*] Pardon, dread Princess, the profane Intrusion
Of your mean Vassal.

Hyperm. No set Speeches, Sir.
Sorrow, like mine, can ill attend round Periods,
Fine Flourishes, quaint Turns, and pompous Words.

Lyn. I'm sorry, Madam, that my ill-tim'd haste
Has interrupted you: I came from *Lynceus*.
But since ——

Hyperm. How? what, from *Lynceus* didst thou say? [*Going.*]
How does the dearest?——O! I crave thy mercy
For interrupting thy most welcome Message.
How does he? speak: Where is he? didst thou see him?
Answer me: does he speak of *Hypermnestra*?
Does he remember his unhappy Wife?
Her Thoughts run all on him: When wilt thou tell me?
For now, methinks, all Night I could attend.

Lyn. If one so overwhelm'd with dire Afflictions
As *Lynceus*, can be well, why he is so.
Nor doubt his Love; if broken Sighs, and Tears,
And tender Words, are Tokens of his Fondness.

Hyperm. Then dost thou think he loves like *Hypermnestra*?

Lyn. Yes, from my Soul, I do.

Hyperm. O! say not so.
Extol his Passion any other way,
And I will thank thee for the dear Relation.
Only forbear to say he loves like me.

Lyn. 'Twas Love of you that made him send me hither:
Fain he would know the cause of your Delay
For while he doubts it, he can find no Comfort.

Hyperm.

Hyperm. 'Twas not for want of Willingness to meet him,
Witness these Chains.

Lyn. [*Aside.*] Oh! this inhuman Father!

Hyperm. To-morrow, by a cruel piece of Kindness,
The King will ease me of a wretched Life.

Lyn. But if the Gods are just, he'll be prevented. [*Aside.*
[*To her.*] Else, if your Love be, as it seems, sincere,
Grief would do that: For *Lyncens* scarce left speaking,
When an arm'd Rabble seiz'd the wondring Hero,
Unready to attempt a brave Defence,
And led him captive to your Father's Palace.

Hyperm. Unhallow'd Dogs! swift Vengeance overtake
The hottest Plagues of Hell be their Reward. [*Em.*

To ye, Infernal Pow'rs, I bend my Pray'r,
For Heaven is deaf. Ye Gods! is this your Justice?

Is this? to punish injur'd Innocence,
And let Blood-thirsty Murderers go free?

Why, why, thou Villain, didst not thou defend him?
Thou couldst not die in a more glorious Cause.

Why not oppose thy wretched worthless Carcass

'Twixt him and Ruin? O ye Mid-night Villains!

You durst not in the Face of Day ha' done this.

The Terror of his Arm, and glitt'ring Sword,

Would ha' dispers'd an Army of such Slaves,

Hence, Coward! who instead of fighting bravely,

And gaining thee a Name in deathless Story,

Cou'dst frame thy Tale in such a barb'rous manner,

As first to tell me of his Health and Love,

And raise me to pitch of sacred Joy;

And then to wound me with his dismal Fate,

And sink me in the deepest Gulph of Misery.

Lyn. [*Aside.*] I wish, indeed, I had not gone so far.

Hyperm.

24 H Y P E R M N E S T R A : Or,

Hyperm. Alas! what else should I expect from thee,
After such Usage from a cruel Father?
Hark! do I dream? or didst thou hear a Voice?
They shall not murder him. Curse on these Fetters!
Shall I not save my Love, nor die with him?

Lyn. I can no longer bear. [*Aside.*] Oh! *Hypermnestra.*
Forgive my Love——— [*To her.*]

Hyperm. Stand off, bold, sawcy Slave.
What Noise is that? I fear the King approaches.
Thou well deserv'st to die, but yet retire:
Thither: fly; fly; and save a wretched Life. [*Exit Lynceus.*]



S C E N E III.

Danaus, Priest, Hypermnestra.

Dan. I thank thee, Heav'n, that thou hast prov'd more
Than this rebellious Girl. Yes, *Hypermnestra,* [*kind,*]
The Gods more tender are of their Vicegerents,
Than to permit their Thrones to be o'er-turn'd
Meerly to gratifie a Woman's Fancy.

Hyperm. I know your barb'rous Meaning———

Dan. I'll tell thee, *Lynceus* now is safe indeed.

Hyperm. A Father! thus inhumanly to treat
A wretched Child, and think it not enough
To rob her of her Joys without a Triumph.

Dan. By Heav'n, I'm pleas'd that I can plague a Wretch
That could so little prize a Father's Safety.
O! that some God would yet to Life restore him,
That I again might wreak my Vengeance on him,
And bring triumphant the glad News to thee.

Hyperm.

Hyperm. Oh! sure they never suck'd a Woman's Breast,
That cou'd efface so sweet a Composition,
And quite destroy the Master-piece of Nature,
But drain'd the horrid Dugs of Bears and Tygers,
And greedily imbib'd their barb'rous Nature.
How could ye see, unmov'd, such bleeding Beauty?
How stand the double Language of his Eyes?
That lovely Majesty that always reign'd there?
If to disarm you their soft Glances fail'd,
I thought their Terror had not lost its Virtue.
But you're well vers'd in your inhuman Trade.

Priest. What Terror, Madam? I've not liv'd so long,
No, nor so ill, as to let Cowards scare me.

Hyperm. A Coward! Villain! but thou need'st not fear
Thus when the Terror of the Forest dies, [him:
E'en trembling Hares insult his Royal Carcass.
A Coward!

Priest. Yes, a most abominable Coward:
He met his Fate as feebly as an Infant.
He beg'd, he wept, he cry'd, he tore his Hair,
Deny'd himself, and swore he was not *Lyncæus*.
Was this your Hero?

Hyperm. Thou liest, stale Hypocrite,
'Twas well thy Order, and thy Fears restrain'd thee
From bold Engagem'nt in the Field of Battel.
For then thou would'st ha' known my *Lyncæus* better.
You must expect to answer all this one Day.

Dan. First thou shalt answer for thy horrid Crimes
Of Perjury and Disobedience.

Hyperm. What's Death to me? my better half is gone;
Tis better once to die, than ev'ry moment:
Tis Hell to live; for nothing but Despair,

26 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

Anguish and Horror rack my tortur'd Soul:
The peaceful Grave will hide me from all these.
Be once a Father, and recal your Sentence,
And give your Daughter ease before to-morrow.

Dan. No: thou shalt know, as well as thy poor Father,
What 'tis to want, what thou deny'dst me, Ease.

To-morrow I'll deliver thee from this,

Only to plunge thee in a deeper Hell.

[To the Priest.] Thou good old Man, what equal Recom-
Can my Endeavours suit to thy Deserts? [pence]

*[While they are talking, Hypermnestra walks about in a
very disturbed Motion, not minding them.]*

To thee I owe my Ease, my Crown, my Life:

Thou, when my dismal Apprehensions

Distracted me, and my ill-boding Fears

Had almost spar'd a Son-in-Law's Endeavours,

When my Throne shook, and my sick Fortune languish'd,

Thou, like a kind Physician, by thy Counsel,

Hast eas'd my Fears, reviv'd my desp'rate Fortune,

And re-establish'd my once tott'ring Throne.

Priest. Virtue, dread Sovereign, is her own Reward.
Allegiance to my Prince requir'd no less.

Dan. Those Principles will quickly starve thee, Priest,
But thou'st more Wit than to be govern'd by 'em.

What if ill Fortune should ha' chang'd the Scene,

And I had fall'n to-night instead of *Lyncus*?

Depriv'd of all, where wouldst thou seek for Comfort?

Would Virtue then have been her own Reward?

An airy Notion would ha' prov'd thin Diet

For that huge Corps; those ragged, thread-bare Maxims
Would scarce conceal thy brawny Nakedness.

Survey my Court, observe who Lord it there,

Who

Who hold the greatest Pensions, and possess
 Places of Honour, Confidence, and Trust,
 And tell me, if thou think'st they have arriv'd
 To this high pitch of Honour, Wealth, and Grandeur,
 By close Adherence to the Rules of Virtue,
 Or firm Allegiance to their Sovereign Lord.
 No, no; they all religiously observ'd
 The Nods, and Motions of my Predecessor,
 And swore they would be always faithful to him;
 Yet when a sad reverse of Fate remov'd him,
 They villanously left his Royal Person,
 And clung to me, I thank 'em, tho' a Stranger:
 And are, no doubt, when Opportunity
 Shall shew it self, as ready to forsake me.
 I tell thee, Priest, there's no such thing as Virtue:
 For whether Int'rest, or the Care of Health,
 Or Reputation keeps us in our Bounds,
 We vainly think that all proceeds from Virtue.
 Thus *Hypermetra*, having sav'd a Husband,
 Thinks she did well, and calls her Lust her Virtue.
 Well-may we judge that Virtue's a Pretence,
 And nothing else, since Bawds and Priests talk most on't.
 Lawyers are honest, and never name it.
 Let's have no more on't. I'll reward thee better:
 Give thee substantial Tokens of my Kindness.

Priest. I'm much indebted to your Majesty:
 Already you've so blest me with your Favour,
 And crown'd my happy Days with envy'd Plenty,
 Your Vassal can't, in Conscience, ask for more.

Dan. What? hast thou not a Friend, that wants Prefer-
Priest. No, Sir. [ment?

Dan. Nor Enemy to persecute?

28 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

Speak if thou hast: for on my Soul he dies,
If thou require it, whosoe'er he be.
Me thou hast eas'd of all my dreadful Foes,
And 'tis but just I recompence thy Service.
Name him.

Priest. The General.

Dan. By Heav'n I hate him.

'Tis true, that Darling of the People's Love
First rais'd me to the Royal Seat of *Argos*.
Yet I can't love him, for he eyes my Faults,
And sometimes publickly reproves me for 'em.

Priest. I know he hates you.

Dan. By th' immortal Gods

'Twas my chief Fear, lest *Lynceus* should have gain'd him
To his Assistance, for he loves him strangely.

Priest. Those Fears are o'er.

Dan. Thanks to thy Love, they are.

Let's hence remove, and privately consult,
How safely to accomplish thy Revenge.

[*Exeunt.*]



SCENE IV.

Lynceus, Hypermnestra.

Lyn. Is't so? but I may first accomplish mine. [*Aside*]
Sweet! lovely Innocence! her Grief's too big
To be express'd: 'Tis time to undeceive her.
Oh! sacred Madam——

Hyperm. Hold, *Proserpina*, stand off, [*Distractedly*]
Thou shalt not have him, he's my Husband.
I will not lose him here; help, help, ye Lovers:
Come, all ye Furies, part 'em, part 'em quickly.

Nay

Nay then I must appeal to *Æacus*.

Lyn. Oh!—hear me——

Hyperm. Hast thou left her thus disguis'd?
She will not know thee now. The wanton Goddess!
Indeed 'twas kindly done.

Lyn. Oh! give me leave——

Hyperm. [*Coming to her self.*] Oh! Oh! where am I?
who's this, that so cruelly has wak'd
Me, from my doubtful Dreams to real Sorrow?
Oh! my sad Heart! has he for ever left me?
Must I no more enjoy his lovely Presence?
No more surround my Love with chaste Embraces?
Nor lay my Hand upon his gentle Bosom?
Must I no more sit by my dearest Lord,
And lose my self in gazing on his Beauty?
Nor greedily devour each melting Word,
Which dropt like Honey from his balmy Lips?
No more behold the Glory of his Eyes,
Nor those sweet Roses which adorn'd his Checks?
No more be playing with his wanton Locks,
Nor grasp his tender Hand, close, close in mine?
No more be ravish'd with his charming Kisses,
And be all Ecstasie in those dear Arms?
No: That harmonious Tongue lies silent now,
And, like an unstrung Lute, forgets its Musick.
Those Eyes, that look'd as lovely as the Morn,
At last are clos'd in everlasting Night.
Those Hands, whose Touch might e'en have rais'd the Dead,
Are now themselves as cold as those of Death.
Those blooming Roses, which so lately flourish'd,
Are in one fatal Night for ever blasted:
And I shall ne'er enjoy those Blessings more.

Lyn. You may, you may——

Hyperm. Yes,—— in another World.

Fly, fly, dull Minutes, and thou, bright *Aurora*,
For sake thy Husband's Arms a little sooner,
That I may quickly be dispatch'd to mine,
Where warbling Birds, soft Streams, and flowry Meads,
And shady Groves shall entertain our Loves.

There, if our Raptures will permit such Thoughts,
I and my *Lynceus* will with Joy reflect,
On those sad Troubles we sustain'd on Earth.

There no Disease, or Pain, no Grief, or Anguish,
No anxious Fears, or Jealousies will plague us;
But Health, and Gladness, and eternal Love,
And Joys unknown, attend our endless Days.

My cruel Father will not there deprive me
Of my Heart's Comfort. There no crafty Priest
Will plot against us. Bloody Murtherers
Shall be confin'd in Adamantine Chains,
Far, far from the blest Fields of faithful Lovers.

Lyn. I tell you, *Lynceus* lives.

Hyperm. Let me enjoy
A little Peace.

Lyn. He is not dead, by Heav'n.

Hyperm. Pr'ythee away, and do not mock my Misery.

Lyn. By all that's good, I don't.

Hyperm. What means the Slave?

Didst thou not tell me he was seiz'd before thee?
Thou wouldst not surely feign thy self a Coward?
Did not my Father and the Priest confirm it?
Did they too feign their execrable Triumph?
No! their rejoicing, and my Hero's Safety,
Are separated more than Hell and Heav'n.

He is, he is no more : why, why am I?
 Why am not I at Peace as well as he?
 Why could we neither live, nor die together?
 Oh! that my Eyes, like everlasting Fountains,
 Could with un-intermitted Tears run o'er,
 To shew my unexhausted Source of Woe.
 If to my Days ten thousand Years were added,
 Ten thousand Years I'd spend in Sighs, and Mourning,
 And never, never know a Moment's Ease;
 And yet my Loss would still surmount my Grief.

Lyn. What Loss? not *Lyncens*, but another dy'd:
 He suffer'd only in his Habit, Madam.

Hyperm. Something within persuades me to believe thee:
 The Priest too said, he suffer'd like a Coward:
 If he spoke Truth, my *Lyncens* is alive.
 Yet O! I dare not think it.

Lyn. Trust your Eyes. [Discovering himself]
 Why starts my Love, and trembling flies her Husband,
 As if I were not *Lyncens*, but his Ghost?
 Speak to me.

Hyperm. If all this is but a Dream;
 A meer Illusion of my troubled Fancy,
 Lock up my Senses faster, gentle Sleep,
 That I may never wake.

Lyn. This is no Dream,
 Nor I a Vision, but thy living Husband. [Embracing her]
 Thou art not us'd to answer me thus coldly. [She turns away.]

Hyperm. Thus when kind Heav'n takes a despairing
 Into the Arms of everlasting Mercy; [Wretch]
 At first, amaz'd, he casts his wondring Eyes
 Around the place, and views the blest Inhabitants
 With sacred, but with unbelieving Joy.

32 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

At length, impatient for the mighty Pleasure,
Seizes his Blifs, and melts away in Raptures.

So I—These Charms confess he is my Husband. [*Embraces*
But why, my Love?—I have a thousand things [*him*.
To say——what means this Habit?

Lyn Thou shalt know.

At *Juno's* Temple, when I long had waited
Your coming, and had waited long in vain,
Perplext with Doubts, I was resolv'd to know
The Cause of your unfortunate Delay.

I chang'd my Habit with a faithful Slave
Of my Retinue; that with greater Safety
I might approach your Father's fatal Palace:
And Fortune now has justify'd my Policy.
Wilt thou forgive my causeless Jealousie?

Hyperm. Oh! I have giv'n thee too just occasion
To doubt my Love: Or, if I had not, yet
Thy Preservation would atone for all.
Pardon, sweet Heav'n, if, by my Rage transported,
I rashly censur'd thy unerring Providence.
And thou, whom next to Heav'n my Soul adores,
Pass by, with kind Interpretation, those
Ill-manner'd words; which my blind Passion dealt thee.

Lyn. Why should I call thy Tendernefs a Fault?
No, witness this, and this——that I forgive thee.

[*Embraces her*.

Hyperm. And thus, thus, I'll revenge thy Jealousie.

[*Embracing him again*.

Lyn. Look down, ye Gods, and envy my Enjoyments
As little, if you can, as I do yours.
But perfect Pleasure, like excessive Grief,
Must quickly vanish: Were the Joys of Heav'n

As

As great as mine, they could not last for ever.
 Here could I dwell for whole Eternities!
 But, oh hard Circumstance! our Bliss must end,
 That it may longer last; and I must leave thee,
 To find thee mine; and if the Gods protect
 A righteous Cause, thou quickly shalt be so.
 Thus much, [*Embracing.*] and then farewell. [*Exit Lynceus.*]

Hyperm. The Hand of Heav'n
 Favour thy Cause, and second thy Design.
 A sudden Drowziness invades my Senses:
 A little Sleep would mitigate my Cares.
 Come, gentle God, and with thy silken Cords
 Tie up my Senses; but let Fancy rove,
 And bring that pleasing Image to my View,
 Which faintly may more solid Joys renew.

[*Exit.*]

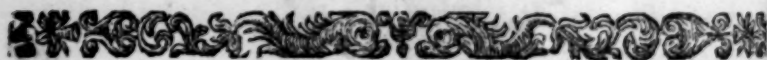




ACT III. SCENE I.

ANTHELEA.

A Way, vain Fears, and thou, pale, ghastly Form,
 That always troublest my Imagination;
 Down, down to Hell, thy proper Habitation,
 And fill the Number of departed Souls.
 Why must *Anthelea* forfeit her Repose,
 Since She can justify the fatal Action?
 Why can't pleas'd Heaven and a smiling Father
 O'ercome the Frowns and Blood of murder'd *Idmon*?
 Shall they create less Joy, than he Despair?
 I know not why I fear, and yet I fear:
 I'll see what Comfort *Hypermnestra* brings.
 She always was a very loving Sister,
 Yet I ne'er wish'd so much as now to see her.
 Where is she? *Hypermnestra*! Sister! Sister!
 She comes——



SCENE II.

Anthelea, Hypermnestra.

Hyperm. And is *Anthelea* come? is she,
 Whom I of all my Sisters held most dear,

Come

Come to insult her most unhappy Sister?
Unkind! couldst thou not let me rest a little?
Heav'n knows I want it.

Anth. You mistake my Errand.

By our past Friendship, 'twas not to disturb
Your Peace, but, if I could, to find my own;
For I have lost it: Yes, my *Hypermnestra*,
I shou'd be happy, cou'd I sleep like you.

Hyperm. Indeed I pity thee, and, if I could,
Would ease thee too; but thine is such a Crime,
That nothing can restore thy banish'd Rest.

Anth. Yet *Hypermnestra* has recover'd hers:
But cares not *Anthelea* should be happy.
Indeed I should not have neglected her.

Hyperm. Oh! had *Anthelea* done like *Hypermnestra*,
She might ha' shar'd her Fate.

Anth. I tell thee, Sister,
I struck with Courage great as thine, but *Idmon*
Perhaps deserv'd a better Fate than *Lynceas*.

Hyperm. Had *Idmon* been belov'd as well as *Lynceus*,
Their Fate had been the same, and ours the same.
Oh! Sister! Sister! thou hast done a Deed
That all Posterity must blush to hear:
While *Hypermnestra* gains eternal Fame,
For saving an unhappy Husband's Life.

Anth. Rather eternal Infamy and Scorn,
For hazarding thy Royal Father's Safety,
And forfeiting thy solemn Vow. Away!
In vain I look for Consolation here,
From one whose Villany surpasses mine.
Farewel: My Soul disdains thy Conference,
Thou perjur'd thing——

[Going]
Hyperm.

36 H Y P E R M N E S T R A : Or,

Hyperm. And nothing but my Love
Should force me to converse with a vile Murthress.

Anth. Refrain thy Love; for now, by Heav'n, I hate thee
As Hell, from whence thy fatal Counsels issued.
Both Gods and Men must hate thee: thou shalt live
Contemn'd of all, and perish unlamented.

Hyperm. And yet perhaps when all my Sisters' Names
Are quite forgot, or mention'd with Reproach,
Some tender-hearted Wife, or pious Matron
Who lov'd her Husband better than *Anthelea*,
When She shall hear the Tale of my Misfortune,
All that I did, and suffer'd for my Love,
With kind Compassion mov'd, may lend one Tear
To my poor Memory. But what's my Fame,
What's all the World to my dear Lord's Affection?
I seek no Love, and fear no Hate but his.

Anth. 'Tis well: what! are the Gods grown weaker then?
Or less concern'd to vindicate their Honour?
Sleeps the swift Lightning? or the dreadful Thunder?
Or have the Torments of the damn'd no Pow'r
To dart Distraction at thy trembling Soul?
How wast thou not afraid to trust thy self
To scaring Dreams, and frightful Apprehensions?
Alas! methinks if I were *Hypermnestra*,
I could not sleep.

Hyperm. Nor I, were I *Anthelea*.
Fear haunts the Guilty: Innocence is bold.
O! if my Heart had been as hard as thine!
Had I (which 'tis a Sin but to imagine)
With barb'rous Hands destroy'd a Husband's Life,
What Doubts? what Fears? what Agonies? what Deaths?
What Hells would rise in my distracted Breast?

And

And if I thought in Sleep to drown my Sorrows,
What sudden Starts? what Sighs and dismal Groans
Would trouble my despairing, restless Slumbers?
What frightful Troops of dire, tormenting Furies,
Would my distracted Fancy range before me?
Rais'd from that Hell which burnt within my Breast.

Anth. In vain thou would'st excuse those horrid Crimes,
Which from thy wretched Ignorance proceeded.
Or dost thou with an impudent Presumption
Dare to defend thy vile Abominations,
While their Remembrance stings thy guilty Conscience,
And plagues thee with those Fears thou hast describ'd?
Vice seldom wants a Colour, and sometimes
Transforms it self into the Shape of Virtue.
But tell me, *Hypermnestra*, what Pretence,
What Artifice can soften thy Damnation?
Alas! all Circumstances must conspire
To aggravate thy Crimes, and raise thy Grief:
How couldst thou disobey so good a Father?

Hyperm. When Parents will enjoin unlawful Actions,
Their Children are absolv'd from their Obedience.
Witness, sweet Heav'n, if any of my Sisters
Could love a Father more than *Hypermnestra*;
Or would have suffer'd more to do him good!
Yes, *Anthelea*, if the Sacrifice
Of our vile Lives could have appeas'd his Fears,
Thou shouldst have seen with what undaunted Courage
Thy Sister would have shewn her Love to *Danaus*.
But when the Test of my Obedience turn'd
On Murder, on a tender Husband's Murder,
Your Pardon, awful Pow'rs, if I prefer'd
Your sacred Will, and disobey'd a Father.

Anth. How dar'st thou stretch those treacherous Hands
to Heav'n,

Or

38 H Y P E R M N E S T R A: Or,

Or thither turn those false dissembling Eyes?
Or with that perjur'd Tongue implore its Pardon?
How canst thou hope the Gods will quell their Vengeance,
And tamely see their Majesty affronted?
Their rev'rend Names abus'd by faithless Tongues?
Is Perjury become a venial Sin?

Hyperm. Unlawful Oaths oblige not.

Anth. Why then, why
Didst thou admit it?

Hyperm. That indeed's the Wound:
Would I had dy'd first!—— Yet I do not wish it,
For then my *Lyncæus* might have suffer'd too,
But 'tis far better, by sincere Repentance,
To deprecate the Anger of the Gods
For one rash Act, than to commit another,
And by two Crimes provoke a double Vengeance.

Anth. Was it unlawful then to save a Father?

Hyperm. Yes, by an Husband's Death.

Anth. No other means
Were left; reduc'd to close Extremity,
My Father clos'd with this Expedient.
If I'm a Murth'ress, you're a Parricide.

Hyperm. My Father lives.

Anth. Yes: but the Oracle
Bad him beware a Son-in-law; and you,
Like a most tender and obedient Child,
Have sav'd the Man that may destroy your Father,
And made your self a Partner in the Crime.

Hyperm. The Oracle pronounc'd not Death, but Danger.
And if the Words were utter'd by a God,
In vain I had attempted to disprove 'em;
If not, they are uncertain, and may fail.

Anth.

Anth. His Fate's too sure: for, wing'd with Indignation,
Lyncens will soon revenge his Brothers Blood.

Hyperm. Future Events are casual: but had *Lyncens*
Gone to the Grave, he could not have return'd.

Anth. Alas! our Obligations to a Parent
So far surpass the conjugal Relation,
That 'tis less impious to destroy a Husband,
Than barely to expose a Father's Life.

Hyperm. That, that's the fatal Error that has led thee
Into this Labyrinth of Infelicity:

O! if by Reason's Clue I could direct
Thy wilder'd Steps, and fix thee in the Truth!

No Obligation binds so fast, *Anthelia*,
Nor lasts so long, as *Hymen's* sacred Bands:

No Vows so holy, as the Matrimonial.
No sooner has the Priest with rev'rend Form

Confirm'd your Nuptials, but your Care and Duty
Turn to your Husband, and should centre there.

What are your Hands, which in the sight of Heav'n
You join with solemn Protections

Of Care, and Duty, Tenderness, and Love,
But lively Emblems of united Hearts,

Of mixt Affections, and two Souls in one?
I tell thee, Husbands are our other selves.

What then is she, who with those very Hands
Unties the Knot, dissolves the blessed Union,

Pierces that Heart, which ought to be as dear
As hers, and murders her superior half?

Anth. By Heav'n she shakes my Soul, I cannot bear it.
[*Aside.*

Hyperm. O! 'tis a Crime so black, it wants a Name,
And will force Hell to find new Torments for it.

Anth.

40 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

Anth. What have I done? O! most unhappy Woman!

Hyperm. Thou dost not answer me.

Anth. What shall I say?

A strong Conviction seizes on my Soul,
And busie Fear invades my trembling Heart.
Nothing but Death, Despair, and deep Damnation,
Appear before me in most dreadful Order.

Hyperm. Blow off those gloomy Thoughts with rising [Sighs;
Or drown 'em with thy Tears: with them fetch off
The Crimson Stain that blots thy Soul.

Anth. [Weeping.] Oh! oh!

Hyperm. Let thy loud Cries to Heav'n for Mercy
Encounter those of murder'd Idmon's Blood.

Enter Idmon's Ghost bloody, and walks cross the Stage.

Anth. Ah! save me, save me! whither shall I fly?

Hyperm. It's gone.

Anth. Oh no! 'Tis here! 'tis here! 'tis here!

Hyperm. Where?

Anth. Dost thou see him?

Hyperm. No.

Anth. I do, I do.

I cannot shut him out, he haunts me still:
Fixt in my Brain his dreadful Image lies.

Hyperm. This Fate attends the guilty! poor *Anthelea*!

Anth. What shall I do? I cannot kide me from him.
Whose Aid shall I implore? Mankind will shun me:
And angry Gods revenge the bloody Deed,
Whose Image in a Husband I effac'd.

[Thunder.
Spare me, sweet Heav'n, a little longer spare me.
I am not fit to die.

Hyperm. The Voice of Heav'n
Will scare the boldest Sinner; while the guiltless

Undaunted

Undaunted stand, and sing beneath the Horror.

[Thunder again.

Anth. I come, I come, I come, ye angry Pow'rs!
Stand off, ye vulgar Ghosts! room, room for Murder.
Ha! there's my Father, and my Sisters: See! see!
How they look! hark! how they groan! 'tis dreadful!
Hold, hold thy Whip, thou frightful Thing! O cruel!

Hyperm. Alas! she raves! O! comfort her kind Heav'n!

Anth. Now, now they come to fetch me: Father! Sisters!
Help! help! put out these Torches: Oh! they'll find me:
They're here: these Snakes will tear me. See!
They twist their slimy Tails: Hark! how they hiss!
There's Blood! Sure 'tis my Husband's! *Idmon*
Stands behind and drives 'em on.

Hyperm. O!

I must interrupt her.

Anth. Now, now,

They've caught me. Oh!

Hyperm. *Anthelea!* Sister!

Look up on me.

Anth. Oh! my distemper'd Head!

Sweet Peace is fled for ever: yet perhaps
The God of Slumbers with his sacred Wand,
May still the raging Tempest of my Brain,
And charm its Fury to a gentle Calm.

[Exit.

Hyperm. And may soft Sleep
Restore thy wandering Senses.

SCENE



SCENE III.

Danaus, Priest, Hypermnestra.

Dan. And was it then for this, thou stubborn Fool!
My Mercy lent thee Leisure to repent?
Was't to ingeminate thy horrid Crimes?
Thou art not mov'd; but fill'd with silent Hopes
Would'st fain behold, with an unnat'ral Joy,
Thy Sire's grey Hairs dy'd with his reeking Gore,
And the loath'd Fountain of thy Life dried up.

Hyperm. No, Sir; could you, could Hell, or could the
Lay greater Suff'rings on me than I feel, [Priest]
I should with much more Patience bear 'em all,
Than see you lose one Drop of sacred Blood.

Priest. 'Twas well my timely Care, and pious Fraud
Successfully dismiss'd th' *Ægyptian* Army,
Else now you might ha' felt the Fate you fear'd.

Dan. My Debt's so great, that I despair to pay it:
Oh! how 'twill sting the disappointed Boy,
When he shall find that his unlucky Army,
By *Lyncæus* his Command have quitted *Lyncæus*.
That Letter was most admirably forg'd,
I think he'll scarce believe another wrote it.

Priest. The Gods forbid that he should live to find
The happy Error: Fortune will be kinder,
She'll not deceive us twice: Oh! had I thought
Of such a Disappointment, all the Gates
Should long e'er this ha' barr'd his fatal Passage. [A]

Dan. Kind Fate, confirm his words: But know, fond
If e'er thy Darling fall within my Reach, [Girl,
Thou shalt be Witness to my dreadful Fury,
Shalt see his bloody, mangled Limbs tormented,
And hear his Groans, when struggling, trembling, dying,
His Soul in strong Convulsions sinks to Hell.
Then shalt thou weep, and sigh, and tear thy Hair,
And beat thy Breast, while thy pleas'd Father smiles
With Indignation o'er his bleeding Entrails.
Come, faithful Man, let's seek some close Retirement,
Unknown to any but our selves and Heav'n;
And there assist me with thy timely Counsel,
How I may quickly finish my Revenge,
Or how defer at least my lingering Fate.

[Exit Danaus and Priest.

SCENE IV.

Hypermnestra.

Hyperm. Is *Lyneus* then bereav'd of mortal Aid?

The Hand of Heav'n protect him; as for me
My Doom is seal'd: And yet I would not live
As poor *Anthelea* and my Sisters do.

Scene opens, and discovers her asleep.

She sleeps! — But see what Starts disturb her Quiet?

[*Anthelea starts in Sleep.*

Guilt cannot rest. Unalterable Fate
Has so decreed, that Fear should still attend
In Vice. Who then would forfeit native Innocence,
To expel bright Virtue from his peaceful Breast,

And

44 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

And all those Joys which ravish'd his Affections?
Break down that brazen Wall of sure Defence,
To let in Fears and macerating Sorrows,
And angry Furies to torment his Soul?

Anth. Oh! Oh!

[*In her Sleep.*]

Hyperm. Her Dreams afflict her broken Heart!
How is she alter'd now from that *Anthelea*,
Whose Slumbers were as soft as gentle Streams,
Whose Looks were still adorn'd with gentle Smiles,
Which seem'd to speak the Sweetness of her Dreams?
Now like a troubled Sea her Fancy works.

Anth. [*Wakes and sees her Sister.*]

Oh! Mercy! Mercy! alas! my *Hypermnestra*,
I've been so frighted!——But my Crimes deserve it.

Hyperm. A fair Acknowledgment fore-runs Repentance,

Anth. O *Hypermnestra*! would the Gods restore
My *Idmon*'s Life, I'd die ten thousand Deaths,
E'er my fell Hand should do that ruthless Deed.
But Fate unmov'd, and the tenacious Grave
With-holds its Prey. What's left for me to do?

[*Kneels.*] Bend, bend your list'ning Ears, ye gracious Pow'rs,
Forgive the griev'd: Let Tears atone for Blood.

[*Rising.*] My Heart is something eas'd: a lively Joy
Transports my Soul, and fills it with new Pleasure.

O *Hypermnestra*! O my second Mother!

To thee I owe this new, this better Life.

We undervalue Peace of Mind too much,

'Till we have lost it. Then with fierce Regret

We grieve at lost Enjoyments. Happy they

Who still retain their primitive Integrity!

In vain we look for Ease, when injur'd Virtue

Leaves our unworthy Breast. Nor Wealth, nor Honour,

No

Nor Strength, nor Beauty, nor the Charms of Pleasure,
Can still the Voice of a tormenting Conscience,
Or gain us Peace, unintervall'd with Horror.
My Royal Father feels a chilling Fear
Break thro' his Guards, and seize his daunted Soul;
Nor can his Crown procure one Moment's Ease:
And fancied Furies persecute my Sisters;
Trembling they fly, and shriek at absent Ghosts.
Farewel, dear Sister: O! that my Endeavours
May have the same effect upon my Sisters. [Exit.]



SCENE V.

Hypermnestra sola.

Now cruel *Danaus*, and th' infernal Priest
Take Counsel to betray my Husband's Life.
Perhaps that Gall'ry where they often meet,
May be the Place design'd for Consultation.
O! that with piercing Ears I could discover
Their dire Intentions, and prevent their Malice.
I'll try: and may the Gods the Deed applaud,
'Tis just that Fraud should be oppos'd by Fraud. [Exit.]



ACT



ACT IV. SCENE I.

Hypermnestra alone.

HYPERMNESTRA.

THE gloomy Shades of Night begin to vanish,
 And doubtful Glimm' rings of uncertain Light
 Faintly paint o'er the clouded Face of Nature,
 And to the World unmask its hidden Beauty.
 The watchful Cock from Barn or hollow Tree
 Extends his Neck, and claps his martial Wings,
 And with shrill Voice proclaims the new-born Day.
 Back to their baleful Cells pale Ghosts repair,
 And in Confinement linger out the tedious Hours:
 Yet sure the Ghosts of these new-murder'd Husbands
 Will Night and Day in dreadful Form pursue
 The Instruments of their untimely Fate.
 Now spiteful Witches leave their Charms unfinish'd,
 And busie Fairies cease to dance their Round,
 And nimbly trip it o'er the checquer'd Plain.
 The whole Creation rears its drowsie Head,
 And freed from Sleep resumes new Life and Vigour.
 The merry Lark, impatient to return
 Her grateful Praises to th'all-chearing Sun,
 Mounts circling, and with sweet Variety
 Warbles melodious; while the lusty Swain

Wonders

Wonders beneath, and with a rural Pipe,
 Or tuneful Voice renews his Maker's Praise.
 His wanton Flocks frisk o'er the verdant Lawn,
 And with rude Concord bleating tell their Joy.
 The Heav'ns rejoice, the Earth's adorn'd with Smiles,
 But I, ah me! unhappy I! can bear
 No part in Nature's universal Joy.
 No gladfom Beam of Soul-enliv'ning Comfort
 Shoots thro' my Breast, but an eternal Gloom
 Sits brooding there, a long, long Night of Woe.
 The chearful Sun, that glads each drooping Heart,
 And breaks the rising Clouds that overwhelm it,
 Collects a dismal Shade round my poor Head,
 And only serves to light me to my Grave.
 I shall no mere behold his rising Glory;
 He, tho' all Night he seem entranc'd to lie
 I' th' Ocean's Bosom, each returning Morn
 Shines with fresh Lustre thro' the Firmament,
 Dispensing welcome Light to Gods and Men;
 But we, when once the Night of Death hath seiz'd us,
 And in the Grave our fading Glory sets,
 Shall know no Morning, no return of Day,
 But lie involv'd in everlasting Darknes.
 Yet 'twou'd a little chear my fainting Spirits,
 To see the dear Man once before I die.
 Impossible! away, deceitful Hopes!
 What do I wish? to see him overwhelm'd
 With killing Grief would prove another Death.
 Could I behold the Transports of his Rage,
 Hear his deep Groans, and view his flowing Tears,
 Shed for my sake, and view 'em unconcern'd?
 Then shou'd I cast my eager, longing Eyes

48 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

On his dear Beauty for a parting Look,
And taste th' immortal Joys, that ever spring
From those sweet Lips, never to taste 'em more!
Ye Gods! what were a thousand Deaths to this?
The Loss of Heav'n exceeds the Pains of Hell.



SCENE II.

Egyptus, Hypermnestra.

Egypt. I'll trouble you no farther; you may leave me.
[To the Attendants,

Here they inform'd me I should find the King:
He is not here; and either they mistook,
Or else (unknown to them) he's since retir'd:
'Twas here (methought) I heard some Child of Woe,
Easing her Griefs by woful Lamentations!
[Seeing her.] Ha! there she is: how lovely in her Tears!
What Beams her Beauty darts thro' Clouds of Woe!
So *Venus* lookt when wet with Silver Drops,
Above the Floods she rais'd her shining Head,
Gilded the Waves, and charm'd the wond'ring Gods.
Hail, beauteous Mourner! (I should know that Face)
Pardon the Rudeness of a Stranger's Feet,
That wander in Pursuit of *Danaus*.

Hyperm. And who art thou, that at so late a Season
Would'st see the King?

Egypt. A Wretch who having felt
Fate's roughest Storm, would fain get shelter here.

Hyperm. Whoe'er thou art, I pity thy Misfortunes,

Indeed

Indeed I do: but 'tis in vain to look
For Comfort here. This is the House of Sorrow;
And I her Daughter. I've no other Parent.

Ægyp. [*Aside.*] All is not well; else whence is this
Disorder?

How is't that ev'ry Face I met below
Carry'd Confusion in't? Why was the Army
Dismiss'd so suddenly? What were those Bodies
That were convey'd to the adjacent Lake?

Oh! *Danaus! Danaus!* I suspect foul Play!

[*To her.*] I thought the cheerful Voice of Mirth and Joy,

And swimming Goblets crown'd with sparkling Wine,

Rich Entertainments, and sweet Harmony,

Might for one Night at least ha' banish'd Care.

Say, weeping Maid, how fare the happy Youths,

And their sweet Brides? You seem to be surpriz'd.

Hyperm. Yes, Sir, to hear a Stranger ask that Question.

Ægyp. A Father's Care was busie in a Stranger.

Hyperm. Are you *Ægyptus*?

Ægyp. Men have call'd me so
These fourscore Years.

Hyperm. Then the bright Eye of Heav'n,
That in its spacious Course surrounds the Globe,
Sees not to-day so great a Wretch as thou art.

Ægyp. Too well I know the height of my Misfortune.
Oh! I have lost the tender'st, loving'st Wife!

Hyperm. I too have lost, I fear, the best of Husbands,
Have lost a Father, lost all hopes of Life,
And yet I think thy Grief surpasses mine.

Ægyp. O the dear Thoughts of *Chariessa's* Charms!

Hyperm. O sweet remembrance of my wretched *Lyncæus*!

50 HYPERMNESRA: Or,

Ægyp. Ha! *Lynceus* wretched! is he wretched then?
Speak: what is this?

Hyperm. I dare not trust your Rage.
It may prove fatal, and involve your Life
In the same Danger with your injur'd Sons;

Ægyp. I'm calm as Air.

Hyperm. But when I've told my Story,
If fear you'll prove as violent as Wind.

Ægyp. No: I'll attend thee with unwearied Patience,
As a young Infant listens to the Tales
Of his fond Nurse. I will not be transported,
Tho' thou should'st tell me that my Sons have follow'd
My *Chariessa* to the Land of Darknefs.

Hyperm. Then be a Man. Thy Sons have follow'd her

Ægyp. Am I not more, to hear such killing News;

[Starts, but recovers.

And yet not follow too?——

Hyperm. Yet *Lynceus* lives;
Heav'n knows how long. He fled to join his Army,
And by their Aid revenge his Brothers' Blood.

Ægyp. What! were they murther'd? pr'ythee tell me all,
Thou seest I bear it well.

Hyperm. Most basely murther'd.

Ægyp. By whom?

Hyperm. Their Wives.

Ægyp. Most execrable Nuptials!

This was a Brother too——

Hyperm. By his Command
They swore to do th' abominable Deed.

Ægyp. But *Lynceus* lives to thank 'em for't.

Hyperm. Alas!

By some Contrivance they've dismiss his Army.

Ægyp.

Ægyp. But I, instructed by my better Genius,
Have brought it back.

Hyperm. The Gods have heard my Pray'r:
Whate'er I suffer, *Lyncæus* may be happy.

Ægyp. You speak as if your Fate and his were one.

Hyperm. Were it not so, I should not wear these Chains,
Nor fall this Day a Sacrifice to Love.

Had I not lov'd more than my Sisters did,

Ægyptus had been altogether childless.

Ægyp. Ten thousand Blessings light upon thy Head,

Thou best of Wives, and Glory of thy Sex!

Thou shalt with Veneration still be mention'd,

Till Time shall be no more: each faithful Bride

Shall many Ages hence instruct her Children

To list thy Name, and imitate thy Virtue.

The Wives of *Argos* will erect thy Statue

In solid Brass, as lasting as thy Fame,

With this Inscription, This is *Hypermnestra*.

Hyperm. I court not Fame, nor posthumous Applause:

Twill be enough, if, when I'm laid in Earth,

My dear-lov'd Lord vouchsafe upon my Tomb

To engrave a Line in Mem'ry of my Love.

Ægyp. Can I arraign the cruel Hand of Heav'n,

For hurling all these Plagues upon my Head,

When so much Virtue lies afflicted here,

And prosp'rous Vice provokes its idle Rage?

Of firm Fidelity, if constant Love,

And God-like Pity have deserv'd this Usage,

Feel the just Effects of my Temerity.

Why did I send th' unhappy Youths to *Argos*?

Why did I urge a wayward Brother's Fury?

Ægyp. Fool that I was! who, eager to revenge

52 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

A slight Affront, have sacrific'd my Children.

Hyperm. Now angry *Juno* has severely wreak'd
Her watchful Malice on our mournful House:
Enough we have endur'd the dire Effects
Of her immortal Jealousie and Rage,
Caus'd by *Jove's* Love, and *Io's* fatal Beauty:
We had been happier, had she been less fair.
Yet she too felt that 'twas a Fault to please;
And wondring at her sudden Transformation,
Flying, pursues her trembling, dreadful self.
When she complain'd, imperfect Bellowings stunn'd
Her troubled Ears; if hot with eager Flight
She sought refreshing Streams to cool her Thirst;
Starting she shunn'd her own approaching Image,
Nor stood the threatning Terrors of her Head.
Alone, forsaken, fearful, tir'd, she roam'd
Around the World. Why then, revengeful Goddess,
Didst thou persist to visit her Posterity,
For Crimes so well atton'd by her? oh! why,
Why could not one unhappy Maid's Misfortune
Be wash'd away without a Sea of Blood?

Ægyp. O wretched Family! O fatal Marriage!

Hyperm. How is the glorious Pomp that Yesternight
Adorn'd the spacious Streets of well-built *Argos*,
Succeeded by a greater Pomp of Sorrow?
Those cheerful Shouts that pierc'd the distant Sky,
Are turn'd to horrid Shrieks, and dreadful Groans.
Melodious Hymns are chang'd to doleful Sighs.
Tears flow instead of Wine, Joy yields to Grief.

Ægyp. In an unlucky Hour your hellish Nuptials
Were celebrated. Your pale Torches flam'd
With Fire from Hell, kindled by Furies Breath.

Griev'd

LOVE IN TEARS.

Griev'd *Hymen* stood aloof, and shook his Head,
 And inauspicious *Juno* left her City.
 Glad Fiends play'd round the Altar, the vast Temple
 Swarm'd with damn'd Spirits, and Hell blest the Night.
 The Croaks of Ravens, and the Screams of Owls,
 That flew in wild Disorder o'er your Heads,
 And all th' ill-boding Brood of Night, denounc'd,
 With dreadful Discord, Plagues, and Death, and Ruin.
 O Devils !

Hyperm. Sir, you promis'd you'd be patient.

Ægyp. Let rav'nous Tygers, of their young bereav'd,
 Refrain their Fury, and forget their Rage,
 And learn dull Patience. 'Twere a Sin in me.
 Why did the Breath of Heav'n, that gave me Life,
 Blow up a sacred Fire within my Breast,
 And thro' my Veins diffuse the growing Flame,
 If I thro' cold Indiff'rence suffer it
 Ingloriously t'expire, and lie extinguish'd?
 In vain the Gods had stamp't their glorious Image
 On our frail Nature, had they not imparted
 Some of their own, divine, ætherial Fire,
 To warm and quicken our dull sluggish Clay,
 To animate our Souls to God-like Vengeance,
 And make us like themselves.

Hyperm. Yet, Sir, the Gods
 Are slow to Anger, and delight in Mercy.
 Long their kind Hand holds out th' impatient Thunder,
 Before it strikes the bold Offender's Head.

Ægyp. If Crimes like these go free, look to it, Gods !
 You are not safe. Take heed lest once again
 Some bold aspiring Sons of Earth should rise,
 Thinking your Thunder spent, and war with Heav'n.
 Beware lest *Danaus* and his Bloody Daughters

Should think you slumber o'er your mighty Care,
 And, dreading to sustain your waking Vengeance,
 Should whet their Daggers, climb up high *Olympus*,
 And try if you are mortal, like their Husbands.
 O monstrous Impudence! what! to invoke
 The awful Name of Heav'n to testify
 Their black Design! To make the Gods the Patrons
 Of violated Faith, and horrid Murder?
 O! how could their hard Hearts resolve to do
 The bloody Deed; or how direct their Hands,
 Their barb'rous Hands, to their fond Husbands Hearts?
 O! with what Face could the inhuman Wretches
 Behold their flowing Gore? How hear the Sighs,
 And dying Groans of their departing Souls?
 Methinks their piercing Shrieks, like Daggers, should
 Ha' struck 'em dead. Where was the Light of Conscience,
 The Lamp of Reason? Did not they conspire
 To flash, like Lightning, in their guilty Faces,
 Blast their Designs, and quell the Pow'r of Darkness?
 What! kill their Husbands! 'twas enough to make
 Nature recoil, to shake the Firmament,
 And strike the reeling Gods with dire Amazement.
 Why redden'd not the angry Face of Heav'n
 With dreadful Blazings of incessant Lightning?
 Why did not all its loud Artillery
 Roaring discharge, in one tremendous Peal,
 Its mighty Rage? till by the horrid Shock,
 The trembling Earth, with strong Convulsions torn,
 Disclos'd the hideous Realms of grisly *Pluto*,
 And rowling Flames, dismal to mortal Eye,
 As if the guilty Scene of this Barbarity
 Were doubly threatned with a flaming Fate,
 And Heav'n and Hell would join in bright Confusion.

The

The Stars should quite have clos'd their twinkling Eyes,
And the pale Moon resum'd her other Forms;
And, or to Sylvan Shades, or those of Hell
Retir'd; for neither Beasts, nor Fiends would do
So damn'd a Deed as these inhuman Sisters.
O Patience! I shall burst with swelling Rage.

Hyperm. Could all your Rage alleviate your Afflictions,
I would not speak; but, Sir, the galling Yoke
Sits closer still, the more you strive against it.
Believe me, Sir, those Ills, we can't remove,
Will grow more easie, if they're born with Patience.

Ægyp. But you must own I have more Cause to mourn
Than all the World besides. Merciless Pow'rs!
Look down from Heav'n, for, partial as you are,
I dare appeal to you: Behold, and see
A poor old Man, oppress'd with mighty Grief,
And almost sinking underneath his Sorrow,
And tell me for what secret Crime, unknown
To my own Soul, all this is come on me.

[Lyes down on the Ground]

Oh! my sick Heart! was ever Grief like mine?
Hither, ye melancholy Sons of Woe,
This way drag on your lingring, faultring Feet.
You, whom the heavy Storms of adverse Fortune
Have shrunk into the narrow state of Need.
You, who have lately follow'd to the Grave
Fond Parents, hopeful Children, tender Wives.
You, who by pining Sickness are oppress'd,
Or feel the Smart of foul-mouth'd Infamy.
To me, to me, ye meagre Troop, repair,
And standing round my miserable Body,
Observe me throughly, weigh my Tribulation,

Consider well how very much I suffer,
 And then cease, cease your causeless Lamentations,
 And own your Troubles have been less than nothing:
 Or if you still resolve to yield to Grief,
 Learn, learn of me, to sigh, and weep, and groan,
 To wring your Hands, and beat your panting Breasts,
 And by the Roots pluck up your stubborn Hairs.

Hyperm. Forbear, dear Sir, afflict your self no more:
 Oh! spare those rev'rend Hairs! O quickly rise,
 And labour to assuage your Head-strong Grief!

Ægyp. Deluded Man, was this the Comfort then [*Rising.*
 I came to find? were these the joyful Nuptials,
 That shou'd have cheer'd my aged, drooping Heart?
 Ah! must the Murder of my Sons appease
 The tort'ring Mem'ry of a buried Wife?
 Was I for this concern'd for my Delay,
 Which nothing but her Fun'ral shou'd ha' caus'd?
 Heav'n knows! I'm come too soon. Unhappy Boys!
 O! had they fall'n before the Walls of *Argos*,
 Besmear'd with Dust and honourable Blood,
 With Sword in Hand, like Men, and bravely slept
 In Honour's Bed, and purchas'd endless Fame,
 I'd bear it like a Man. But to be slaughter'd thus,
 Like Beast's i'th' Shambles——I'm a very Villain,
 If, cruel Heav'n, I not almost forgive thee,
 (Pardon, dear Saint, my barb'rous Tendernefs)
 For snatching *Chariessa* from my Bosom.
 Perhaps in kind Regard to so much Virtue,
 You antedated her approaching Fate,
 And would not see her undergo that Trial
 Which breaks her Husband's Heart. She always ways
 A very tender and indulgent Mother.

How

How wou'd she bear this grievous Stroke of Fate!
 Her Grief would soon ha' done the Work of Heav'n,
 And turn'd her trembling Body into Marble,
 And she, another *Niobe*, would stand
 A weeping Monument of pow'rful Woe:
 The frightful Image of the ugly Action
 Freezes my Heart, and, like *Medusa's* Head,
 Will make it soon as stony as my Brother's.
 Why, why did the kind, cruel Gods delude me
 With the frail Blessing of a num'rous Issue?
 And then, when feeble Age requir'd a Prop
 Whereton to lean, and rest my weary Limbs,
 Convert my Staff into a broken Reed,
 While faultring I stumble into my Grave?
 Urge not, ye Barren, urge not angry Heav'n
 To dash your happy Days with Grief and Care.
 Believe me, none but Parents know, what weight
 Of Woe the Loss of Children lays on Parents.

Hyperm. O Royal Sir, your Grief afflicts me more
 Than the sad Thoughts of my approaching Fate.

Ægyp. Such unexampled Tendernefs shines in thee,
 That I can hardly think thou sprang'st from *Danans*.
 Some am'rous God deceiv'd thy Mother's Eyes,
 Possess'd her Charms, and form'd thee half divine;
 For thou hast nothing of my Brother in thee.
 My Brother! Yes, I'll rather think him so,
 Than but suspect the virtuous Saint that bare me.
 But let the Name of Coward be my Lot
 If I forgive him. No, Blood-thirsty *Danans*,
 Thou fall'st this Hour a pleasing Sacrifice
 To th' injur'd *Manes* of my murder'd Son
 O the sweet Musick of his dying Groans!

58 *H Y P E R M N E S T R A: Or,*

How will his streaming Blood refresh the Thirst
 Of my Revenge? With what Variety
 His mangled Limbs will feed my longing Eyes!
 Wretched *Ægyptus*! now ill Fate pursues thee.
 I've known the Day, when with this honest Sword,
 And active Arm, my Courage has done Wonders.
 Witness that Field where brave *Zophares* fell!
 Him, having charg'd thro' thickest Troops, and sent
 A thousand vulgar Souls to Hell, I cleft
 Down to the Waste, and won the glorious Day.
 How am I alter'd now from that *Ægyptus*!
 What? what can this poor trembling Hand do now?
 For Shame, old Man, put up thy useless Sword:
 Wilt thou attack a Prince within his Palace?
 Thou kill his Guards, who canst not wield thy Sword?
 Then, then thou shouldst ha' slain the barb'rous Villain,
 And torn in pieces his inhuman Daughters,
 When in thy Pow'r he lay at *Ægypt's* Court,
 And vilely spurn'd thy Offer of Alliance.
 Now all my hopes must center in my *Lyncæus*.
 Long it can't be, e'er he revenge our Wrongs.
 Rejoice, my Soul, dire Vengeance is at hand.



SCENE III.

Danaus, Priest, *Ægyptus*, *Hypermnestra*.

Dan. Who's this, that with unseasonable Noise,
 Disturbs our sacred Peace, and talks of Vengeance?

Ægyp. Dost thou not know me?

Dan.

Dan. Ha! by Heav'n 'tis he!
I would not see that Face.

Ægyp. What! has thy Guilt!
Confounded thee? 'Twas I that talk'd of Vengeance.

And thus I'll take it. [*Draws.*] [*Danaus draws.*]

Priest. Guards, secure the Traytor:
Disarm him instantly. [*He defends himself, they disarm him.*]

Dan. Ill-manner'd Prince,
How dar'st thou brave me under my own Roof;
And violate the Laws of Hospitality?

Ægyp. Dost thou upbraid me with the Breach of Laws;
Insolent Murderer!

Dan. For that thank thy self:
For thou didst urge me to't. Thy Children's Blood
Be on thy Head. Bear him to instant Death.

Ægyp. And instant let it be: for know, proud Tyrant,
Lyncæus e'er this joins his returning Army,
And quickly will revenge his Father's Death.

[*Exit Ægyptus cum Guards.*]



SCENE IV.

Priest. Retire we then, my Lord, and meditate
On wholesome Measures to secure your Safety.

[*Exeunt Danaus and Priest*]

SCENE



SCENE V.

Hypermnestra sola.

Hyperm. May injur'd Heav'n confound your Consultati-
 I come, ye Gods, to beg your Aid for *Lyncæus*. [ons.
 Howe'er you spare not his unhappy Wife,
 Yet save, O save my dearer Hero's Life!



ACT



ACT V. SCENE I.

Danaus, Priest, Lynceus Prisoner, and Guards.

DANAUS.

Fortune, I thank thee; well hast thou atton'd
For all thy Spight. Where did they seize the Wretch?
Priest. Near th' Eastern Port, in Conference with a Sol-
Who fled, as they approach'd. [dier,



SCENE II.

Enter Hypermnestra.

Hyperm. What do I see?

Is it my Husband?

Dan. Look carefully upon him,

Perhaps once more we may mistake the Man.

Lyn. Ungen'rous! dost thou mock at our Misfortune?
O for a Sword and Freedom!

Dan. Ha! ha! ha!

Lyn. My Brothers feel not this: would I had fall'n
Last Night. O! when wilt thou be kind and kill me?
Thy scurril Mirth wounds deeper than thy Steel.

Dan. Am I so blest? O! I could spend whole Years
In killing thee! Tell me, false, perjur'd Girl,
Have I not kept my Word? Did not I say
It should be thus? Yet, yet, a little longer,

Till

62 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

Till I have heap'd more Plagues upon thy Head,
And thou shalt prove the Sharpness of my Steel.

Lyn. I do defie thee: 'Tis not in thy Pow'r,
No, nor in Fate's, to make me more unhappy.

Dan. Thy Soldiers lye before the Walls of *Argos*,
Unable to assist their dying Master.

Lyn. 'Tis false: they're gone. O! had they still been
We should ha' chang'd our Fate. [there]

Dan. Thy crafty Father
Compell'd 'em to return, as on his way
He met 'em bending homeward.

Lyn. O curst Chance!
Had I advanc'd my solitary Steps
Onward a little——But hard Fate oppos'd.

Dan. Thy Mother's dead.

Lyn. She's happy; but *Ægyptus*——

Dan. Is happy too, if Death be Happiness.
I eas'd his Grief.

Lyn. Now swift Perdition catch thee,
Thou Royal Villain! Thou'st done——

Dan. Only this,
And then no more; thy tender, faithful Bride
Shall only stay to mourn a Husband's Loss,
And feel the Tortures of despairing Love,
Then suffer those of dying.

Lyn. For my Life,
I set it not at this——But why, ye Pow'rs,
Oh! why, most barb'rous Prince, must she endure
All this, since too much Piety's her Crime?
Trust me, my Love, I cannot fear the Sting
Of Death: but when I think what thou must suffer
For me, that Dagger wounds me to the Heart.

Hyperm.

Hyperm. Oh!

[*They look stedfastly at each other some time, and then embrace most fondly.*]

Dan. This cold Steel should quickly quench those Flames,
But that I know your Hell will more torment you,
When I have torn you from your Heav'n of Bliss.
Now, Slave, have at thy Heart. [*Offering to draw.*]

Hyperm. Oh! spare his Life.

[*Kneeling.*]

Dan. Woman, hold off; for, on my Soul he dies,
Tho' all the World should kneel with *Hypermnestra*,
And weeping Gods shou'd second the Petition.

Hyperm. What has he done? why must my Husband die?

Dan. Ha! Done! Who, unprovok'd, with hostile Arms
Rudely invaded our most injur'd Country,
And fill'd the Land with Blood and Desolation?
Who brought destructive Rage, and barb'rous Troops,
Before the peaceful Walls of wond'ring *Argos*?
Who laid the City waste with Sword and Famine?
Whence are the Widow's Sighs? the Orphan's Tears,
And Parents Moans? Who fought thy Father's Life?
O! could you guess what Fears, what Apprehensions,
What Doubts, what Jealousies, what Racks, what Tortures
I've suffer'd for his sake!——Hell vex him for't.

Hyperm. All this Submission to a Father's Pleasure——

Dan. Indeed? 'tis well. Does *Hypermnestra* then
Plead for Obedience to a Father's Will?

Perverse and rash! thy Words condemn thy Actions.

By thy own Rule thou shouldst have murder'd *Lyncens*.

Hyperm. But Sir——

Dan. But were he innocent as Heav'n,
Self-preservation, the great Law of Nature,
Calls for his Blood. The fatal Oracle

Rings

Hyperm.

64 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

Rings *Lynceus*' Knell in my distracted Ears.

Hyperm. Oh! heed not that: Their Meaning's ever
And oftentimes proves false. [doubtful;

Dan. Should I attend
The Voice of Heav'n, or thine? I'll hear no more.

[Offers to draw

Hyperm. You must, you shall.

Dan. Off quickly, let me go;
Or I shall tread thy Soul out.

Hyperm. Spurn me, spurn me,
Tread on me, trample on my tender Bosom,
Yet I will never leave you, till my Tears
At last have melted you to kind Compassion.

Dan. Damnation!

[Throwing away,

Hyperm. Do, do; drag your wretched Daughter,
Bruise her poor Limbs upon the rugged Stones,
Or dash her hated Head against the Pavement,
She'll bear it all from you.

Lyn. So Furies drag thee,
Inhuman Tyrant.

Dan. Now, Damnation seize me,
If I not spare thy Life, if thou wilt leave me.

Hyperm. What! live without him! live without my
Husband!

What Cruelty is this? O never! never!
Take, take the Dagger, which in vain you gave me,
And pierce your *Hypermnestra*'s faithful Breast:
Or hold the burning Torch, whose sacred Flame
I have not injur'd, and to Ashes burn me.
Let *Hypermnestra* die, but spare her Husband.

Dan. Dye then.

[Offering to kill her

Lyn. Thou dar'st not do it.

[Interposing

Dan.

Dan. Say'st thou? ha!

[Striking him.]

Lyn. Shame on thy Head, thou Coward! O these Chains!

[Shaking them.]

Dan. [To her.] For thee, thou liv'st to see this Villain die.

Hyperm. Yet hear me. By your rev'rend Knees, your Hand,

And sacred Head, I do conjure you, hear me.

Dan. That Head which *Lynceus* sought; in vain thou sue'st, For unregarded all thy Tears shall flow.

Lyn. Reserve those Tears, reserve 'em for thy self.

I cannot see thee thus! 'tis worse than Death.

Leave me to Fate: I've liv'd too long already.

Perhaps when I am cold, as soon I shall be,

Thy Father's Rage may cool, and turn to Pity.

Hyperm. [Looking on Lynceus.] What? What am I? that I should aim to gain

A wretched Life at the Expence of thine?

[To Danaus.] O sacred Sir, if ever *Hypermnestras*

Was welcome to her Royal Father's Arms,

By those kind Words, by all those fond Embraces,

And chaste paternal Kisses, which your Love

Has dealt your Daughter in her happier Days,

When you could tell me, that of all your Children

None shar'd your Love so much as *Hypermnestras*,

Or had so much of your *Monefa* in her;

Hear, hear my Pray'r! But oh! too late I find

You never lov'd me.

Dan. That I lov'd thee dearly

Witness these Tears. But thou hast us'd me basely:

Reserv'd the Man, that would destroy thy Father.

Hyperm. Enough of Blood was shed within these Walls

Without my help. O spill no more! spare his,

Spare

66 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

Spare his, and make Atonement for the rest.
O! if you hope the Gods should e'er forgive you,
Or covet Fraise among the Sons of Men:
If you would taste the Joy of peaceful Minds,
Or aim at Pleasures that will know no End,
Let *Lyncæus* live.

Dan. I never can be happy
Till *Lyncæus* dies. The Gods will have it so.

Hyperm. O fear not him! Can Looks like those conceal
Revengeful Thoughts? Oh no! nothing but Love
And Peace inhabit that fair Edifice.
Alas! he murders only with his Eyes.

Say, *Lyncæus*, is't not so?

Lyn. My honest Heart
Disdains to lye. Know, I abhor thee, Tyrant!
And did not Fate withstand——

Dan. I know thy Meaning:
And thus I thank thee. [Going to draw again

Hyperm. Ah! what shall I say?
Some God instruct my Tongue——

[Sees her Mother's Picture hanging up in her Anti-chamber
O see, my Father!

See, who pleads there in *Hypermnestra's* Cause.

Dan. My dear *Monefa*! [Looking at the Picture

Hyperm. O let her prevail!
Eloquent Beauty, and that vocal Form,
With silent Rhet'rick, may affect you more
Than all that I can say. Let those bright Eyes
Prove more successful than my feeble Tongue.
You know she always lov'd you, and you own'd
An equal Flame. Let not your Love die with her.
O! let the dear Remembrance of those Joys,

LOVE in TEARS. 67

That swell'd your Bosom, and engag'd your Heart,
While yet your lov'd *Monefa* blest your Arms,
Speak for her Daughter, kindle gentler Flames
Within my Father's Breast: By all her Charms,
Each kind Embrace, and ev'ry melting Kiss,
By all the Transports of your furious Love,
Your pleasing Ecstasies, your dying Raptures,
Pity my Grievs, and learn to be a Father.

Dan. I do.

Hyperm. O ease 'em too, and spare my Love!

Dan. Ha! have a care.

Hyperm. Imagine, Sir, you see

My poor, dear Mother lying on her Death-bed,
As once you did, just breathing out her Soul;
Then call to Mind her words: Farewel, she said,
Farewel, my Lord. Remember your *Monefa*.

[*Danaus weeps.*

And, when I'm gone, be kind to *Hypermnestra*.

Think, if departed Souls have any Sense

Things transacted here, think how she is,

When she beholds her sad afflicted Child

Feeeling, lamenting, begging, weeping, sighing,

All in vain; while her obdurate Lord,

Unmindful of the tender Obligation

Dying Breath impos'd, neglects her Sorrows.

[*All the while she speaks, the Guards seem concern'd.*

Dan. She shakes my Soul, my Resolution staggers.

Griev'd. I fear he'll yield to her: but I shall rouse him.

[*Aside.*

Hyperm. [To the Guards.] You tender-hearted Men,
who seem to mourn

Hypermnestra's lamentable Fate,

Draw

68 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

Draw near, and kneel before your Royal Master.
 There in the softest Words, and mournful Postures,
 Labour to melt his unrelenting Heart,
 That tender Thoughts may make Impressions there.
 Believe me, when you guard him from his Passions,
 You will oblige him by the noblest Service.
 Perhaps your known Fidelity, the Toils,
 And hard Fatigues your Loyalty has cost you,
 May tempt that gen'rous King to lend an Ear
 To your Complaint, and yield to your Petition.
 Tell him how hard, how wond'rous hard it is
 Thus to be torn from a most tender Husband.
 Then beg him to suppose he saw *Monefa*
 Ready to fall, and by a Father's Hand;
 And ask him, if he would not kneel, and weep, and beg
 To save her Life, and move a cruel Father,

Priest. I cannot hold: What? shall a Woman's Tears
 Seal up my Lips, and bribe my honest Heart,
 By treach'rous Silence to betray my Master?
 Oh! Royal Sir! —————

Dan. Let me enjoy the Thought
 A little ——— Why the very'st Wretch that lives
 Enjoys this Privilege from bounteous Nature,
 To dream at least of Joy.

Priest. The Oracle,
 Think on the Oracle.

Dan. Ha! thou hast wak'd me:
 Too long I've trifled — Guards, tear off this Fury.

[*They stand*

Hyperm. See! how they hang their Heads! and
 their Arms!

See! how they weep! O Sir! shall Men like these,

LOVE in TEARS. 69

Nurſt up in Blood, and cruel by Profeſſion,
Feel more Compaſſion for me, than a Father?

Dan. Villains, diſpatch. I wonnot hear thee.

[Guards take her off.]

Hyperm. Oh!

Dan. Now tell thy Friends in Hell I ſent thee thither.

[Going to kill her.] [It thunders.]

Lyn. [Coming up to him.] Hear that, and tremble: Lo!
the Mouth of Heav'n

Is open'd wide againſt thee, while thy Heart
Condemns thy purpoſe. The hot Thunder-bolt
Was form'd for Crimes like thine. [Thunder again.]

Hyperm. O! Father! Father!

Tempt not the Gods to pour their Plagues upon thee.

The Voice of Murder cries from Earth to Heav'n,

And will be heard: Who e'er imbru'd his Hands

In guiltleſs Blood, and proſper'd? All Mankind

Start at a Murderer, and drive him out

From their Society. The blackeſt Infamy

Sticks on his Name. Alone a thouſand Fears

Purſue him, and diſmay his Coward Soul. [Thunder.]

He fears himſelf: while in his troubled Breſt

Guilt, Sorrow, Anger, Shame, and Deſperation

(The Furies of the Mind) raiſe Civil Wars.

Dan. All this indeed I feel.

[Aſide.]

Hyperm. Sometimes the Ghoſts

Of thoſe he murder'd wound his guilty Eyes,

And ſtill ſupply his Fancy with fresh Horror.

Enter Ghoſts of Ægyptus and others bloody. They ſhake
their Heads at Danaus and go off.

Lyn. Ha! thou haſt ~~done~~ this.

Dan.

70 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

Dan. Speak! oh! speak to 'em! [To the Priest.

Lyn. What! do these make thee start? how wilt thou bear.

The Torments of the damn'd?

Hyperm. When angry Fiends
Shall drag you from the terrible Tribunal
Of *Rhadamanthus*, sentenc'd to Damnation.
When gloomy Darkness shall encrease your Sorrow;
When you lie bound in Misery and Iron,
And Shrieks and Groans torment your restless Ears;
When dire *Tisiphone* insulting stands,
And with sharp Scourges tears your mangled Flesh;
The Wheel, the Vulture, and the restless Stone,
Will be too light a Punishment for Murder.

It thunders. Enter *Furies*, *Alecto*, *Tisiphone*, and *Megæra*, with flaming Torches in one Hand, and Whips in the other. *Danaus* seeing them drops his Sword. They sing a threatening Song to *Danaus*, and go off.



SONG.

S O N G.

TISIPHONE.

FROM Pluto's gloomy Realms we come,
O Tyrant, to denounce thy Doom.

MEGÆRA.

Hell's trembling Judges can't ordain,
For Crimes so bold, an equal Pain.

ALECTO.

To us they will their Pow'r resign,
And we to plague thee will combine.

CHORUS of all together.

Tremble at thy approaching Woe,
Where Furies judge, and punish too.

TISIPHONE.

With my sounding Scourge will lash
And tear thy mangl'd, trembling Flesh.

MEGÆRA.

With this undying Fire,
To torment thee will conspire.

ALECTO.

72 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

ALECTO.

*My hissing Scorpions I'll release,
Whose Stings thy Tortures shall encrease.*

CHORUS.

*Tremble at thy approaching Woe,
Where Furies judge, and punish too.*

TISIPHONE.

*The damn'd from Pain shall find Relief,
And join to aggravate thy Grief.*

MEGERA.

*They who on Earth inhuman were,
For thee shall frame new Torments here.*

ALECTO.

*Malicious Fiends their Wit shall strain
To minister eternal Pain.
All Hell's united Pow'rs shall try
To imitate thy Cruelty.*

CHORUS.

*Tremble at thy approaching Woe,
Where Furies judge, and punish too.*

[Exit

The Song being ended, Danaus and the Priest stand mute for a while, looking earnestly at each other. After which the Priest comes up to Danaus.

Priest. Now in the sacred Name of Royalty
Remember who you are, dismiss your Fears,
And once more look a King. Your Slave's Allegiance
Commands him to remind you of your Safety,
And great *Apollo's* Voice. Your Sword, my Lord.

[Taking it up, and giving it.

Dan. *[Refusing it.]* No more of Blood: I dare not think
on Blood.

[Pausing a while takes it.

It shall be so. Perhaps the Blood of *Danaus*
May wash away the Blood that *Danaus* spilt.

[Offers to kill himself.

Priest. The Gods forbid, that I unmov'd should see
My Royal Master fall. *[Wrests the Sword from him.*
Or by his Mercy
Expose his sacred Life to future Danger.
Oh! give me Leave——

Dan. I do.

Priest. Then may thy Blood
Be on my Head.

[He runs at Lynceus.

Hyperm. Hold Villain! Father! ah!

[She swoons.

*As he runs at Lynceus, Enter General and Soldiers with
their Swords drawn: The General puts by the Priest's
Sword, and takes it from him.*

Gen. Villain, avaunt.

D

Lynceus

[Exeunt

74 H Y P E R M N E S T R A : Or,

Lynceus runs to Hypermnestra, Soldiers assist in lifting her up.
Dan. What Insolence is this?

My Guards there; seize that proud, imperious Traytor.

The Guards approach, but at the General's Words draw back again. The Priest seeing that steals off.

Gen. Who dares attempt it? sheathe your idle Swords,
 Nor rashly tempt inevitable Fate. [*Turning to the Soldiers.*
 Yes, *Danaus*, here are those that will no longer
 Stand unconcern'd, and see their native Country
 Abus'd by thee, thou false, ungrateful Tyrant!

Hyperm. [*recovering.*] Where is my Husband? have you
 murder'd him? [*Running to her Father.*

Oh! if you have not, spare him, spare him yet.

Lyn. Behold thy Husband lives. The Eye of Heav'n
 Clos'd not with thine, but waking has preserv'd me.

Hyperm. Oh! my dear Lord! is't given me once again
 To see you mine, mine, living and secure?
 My swelling Heart! I doubt my Joy will prove
 As fatal as my Fear: Where! oh! where
 Ought I to pay my Thanks?

Lyn. [*Pointing to the General.*] Here, *Hypermnestra*:
 When I, returning from the fruitless Search
 Of my departed Army, now had past
 The Eastern Port, I met that faithful Man;

[*Pointing to one of the Soldiers*
 I knew him honest, by the Gen'ral lov'd,
 I thought him too my Friend, an Enemy
 To Sycophants and Tyrants. Him I trusted

With the black Story of this Tragick Night.
Some other Things I told him, which concern'd
The Gen'ral's Safety, earnestly desiring
To be conducted to him. When a Band
Of Villains, arm'd with naked Swords, appear'd:
I urg'd his Flight. He answer'd, Your Security,
And not my Fears, prevail with me; and fled.
How I behav'd my self, they know who took me.
He, I presume, related the whole Story
To *Hippanax*, who thought it great and God-like
To rescue injur'd Virtue from Oppression:
And by his timely Aid preserv'd my Life.

Hyperm. May all the Gods consult to crown thy Love
With Blessings yet unknown, thou honest Man.

[To the General.

Dan. Rather to pour unheard-of Curses down
On his rebellious Head. Death! must I stand,
And see my sawcy Vassals rudely beard
Affronted Majesty? Kings stand on Earth
High Heav'n's Vicegerents, and if they offend,
They stand accountable to none, but those
They represent: when Subjects have assum'd
A Privilege to punish Kings, they leap
Into the Throne, and make themselves their Masters.

Gen. Few Years ago, this was not your Opinion,
When *Sthenelus* was torn from Regal Pow'r.
'Tis true, when Kings behave themselves like Gods,
And grace their awful Thrones with heavenly Virtues,
They should command our Rev'rence: But when Tyrants
Abuse their Pow'r, and with unkingly Baseness
Sland'ring the guiltless, Nature calls aloud,

76 H Y P E R M N E S T R A : Or,

Commands their Subjects to assert their Rights,
And reassume the Pow'r they rashly gave.

Dan. If such Authority's indulg'd to Subjects,
Then how precarious is the State of Princes!
Who ever lie expos'd (for oh! what Man,
What God can always please a fickle Nation?)
To the rude Insults of prevailing Factions?

Gen. But Law must be the Judge.

Dan. The Voice of Law,
The Voice of Nature, Reason, Conscience, all,
All speak too low amidst the Clash of Arms,
The Trumpet's Clangor, and the Victor's Shouts.
Gen. Thy Villany speaks louder than all these,
Ungen'rous Man! (for King I will not call thee.)
Was it for this I rais'd thy abject Fortune,
And bid thee be a King? Was't to disgrace
My Choice, and the long Race of *Argive* Princes?
Could neither Sense of Gratitude incline thee
To love our Country? nor the rigid Fate
Of *Sthenelus* depos'd, that standing Monument
Of Shipwrack'd Royalty, warn thee to steer
The Common-wealth with a more steady Hand,
And not to split on the same fatal Rock?
Too long already has our Country groan'd
Under the Scourge of thy oppressive Cruelty:
But now thou hast outdone thy self in Mischief.
O! 'twas a Deed ev'n Fiends would blush to hear;
'Tis not in Words to paint it to the Life:
The very Thought darts Horror through my Soul.
Had thy wrong'd People's Love surpass'd their Hatred,

All, all would join to hunt thee from the World.
More I could say——— but I forbear to urge
Thy barb'rous Designs against the Man
That from the Ground advanc'd thee to the Throne.
Ingratitude is lost in Crimes like thine.

Dan. Why wilt thou not upbraid me? I deserve

[*Seeming convicted.*]

All the Reproach, the Obloquies, and Taunts
That the invenom'd Tongue of Spight can utter.

O! Idiot! Idiot! to be thus mis-led

By fawning Parasites. O that damn'd Priest!

Lyn. [*Looking about for him.*] Where is the Villain? seek
him instantly.

[*To the Soldiers.*]

Gen. Let those who love themselves above their Country,

Neglecting publick Wrongs, redress their own.

Not thy Ingratitude to me, base Man,

But just Compassion to my bleeding Country,

Compels me to confront thy Cruelty.

Methinks I see her stand besmear'd with Blood,

Each Wound accusing my Unkindness to her,

For mounting thee upon her Neck, thou Tyrant.

The Curses of my Country-men pursue me,

For what they've suffer'd, and will overtake me,

If after this, I should permit thy Sword

To scatter more Destruction thro' the Land.

On me their Eyes are bent; on me who brought

This Plague upon 'em thro' my Fond Credulity.

But now the time is come, when I must answer

Their Expectations, and remove their Slav'ry.

[*Hypermnestra weeps.*]

78 H Y P E R M N E S T R A: Or,

They want a Man, that will protect the Innocent,
And drive Injustice from their peaceful Walls.
And such a one they'll have: Here stands a Man
Great in his Griefs, majestick in his Chains,
Who by bright Aétions has adorn'd his Birth,
And well deserves more than a single Crown.
Him my Authority, back'd with the Love
And Inclinations of the willing People,
Shall court to join the injur'd Crown of *Argos*
To that of *Ægypt*. [*Guards go over to Lynceus.*
Slaves! break off their Fetters.

Lyn. Your Obligations are so great and num'rous,
That all Acknowledgments will prove unequal.
My Life, my Liberty, a Kingdom, all,
Are owing to your Bounty. But alas!
What's Life, what's Liberty, or what's a Kingdom,
To *Hypermnestra*? Her thou hast restor'd me.
Now, now I can embrace thee, O my Love!
This is a happy Hour: Dry up thy Tears.
To-morrow we'll forsake this place of Horror,
And leave our Friend to govern in our stead.

Re-enter Soldiers.

Lyn. Well; where's the Slave?

Sold. Long time we search'd in vain;
At last we found him: but when we attempted
To seize him, lo! he drew a fatal Dagger,
And sheath'd it in his Bosom.

Gen. Desp'rate Wretch!

My

My Lord, you want a Sword.

[Offers him that which he took from the Priest.

Lyn. I thank you, Sir.

[Taking it.

[To Danaus.] Does not this Instrument of Death inform thee
What Fate thou justly may'st expect from Lynceus.

Dye Tyrant.

[Makes at him.

Gen. His black Crimes deserve no less; *[Staying him.*

But you, my Lord, will be more merciful.

Tho' he ne'er knew what Goodness meant, you will.

Lyn. Goodness to him? No, 'twere abusing Goodness.
How would the World abhor my patient Nature,
Should I, unmov'd, behold my Father's Murderer,
And tamely suffer him to go unpunish'd?

Gen. To his own galling Conscience leave the Wretch;
That will be Punishment enough, my Lord.

Lyn. Not for me. From my Hands his Deeds require
Immediate Punishment, and thus I'll take it.

[Making at him again.

Hyperm. *[Interposing.]* Oh! spare my Father! Is he not
my Father?

I cannot see him die.

Lyn. How! if thou lov'st me,

Away: make room for my retarded Vengeance.

Aloud the Blood of my ill-fated Brothers,

And Royal Father, cry for Vengeance to me,

To me, who only live t'avenge their Wrongs.

Hyperm. Revenge is but the wretched Satisfaction
Of little Souls, that dare not pass by Wrongs.

'Tis nobler to forgive. Thou'lt gain more Fame

By conquering thy self, than this great City.

Thy Wisdom, Courage, Beauty, Strength, and Love,

Are

My

80 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

Are all divine. Oh! sully not these Graces
With hellish Rage. Add to thy other Virtues
Bright Mercy too, and shine all o'er a God.

Lyn. Oh! *Hypermnestra*! 'tis the Work of Heav'n
To cut destructive Tyrants from the Earth.
Mankind will bless me, Nations will adore me,
For saving so much Blood.

Hyperm. But should the Gods
Reward each small Offence with present Death,
They'd soon destroy their Thunder and Mankind.

Lyn. Small! dost thou think it small! O *Hypermnestra*!
Should any one attempt to take thy Life,
Tho' that were all, I would not labour thus
For his; but strike the Villain to the Heart.

Hyperm. Not if he were a Father. How the Tongues
Of busie Men will load me with Dishonour,
Should I neglect to save a Father's Life.
How censure thy Affection, if, in spite
Of all my Tears, thou persevere to slight me?
Oh! thou didst never love me.

Lyn. Do not break
My Heart with too much Tendernefs.

Hyperm. I fear
Thy Cruelty'll break mine. Oh! *Lyncens! Lyncens!*
I would not use thee thus, indeed I would not.
What couldst thou ask of thy poor, loving Wife,
That she'd refuse to grant?

Lyn. Yet *Hypermnestra*
Would think as I do, where she in my place.

Hyperm. Unhappy I! in vain I sav'd a Husband,
If I must kill a Father. I shall equal

My Sisters Cruelty. Now they'll have Cause
To think me as inhuman as themselves.

O do not stain my rising Fame with Blood!

But if the Blood of *Danaus* must be spilt,
And nothing else will satisfy thy Vengeance;

His Blood runs here, [Pointing to her Heart.]

Here plunge thy cruel Sword:

For thou shalt reach his Heart no other way.

[Going between them.]

This Comfort I shall find at least in Death,

That I have sav'd a Husband, and a Father.

Dan. I am not worth this doubtful Strife of Love:

O *Hypermetra*! I'm ashamed to hear

An injur'd Daughter plead so tenderly

For a most barb'rous Father. All I ask

Is but to be forgiven. And as for Death,

I have deserv'd it well, and thus I meet it.

[Running towards the Sword.]

Hypermetra. Oh! live, for my sake, live, and I forgive
thee.

My Husband shall forgive thee. Cruel *Lyncus*!

Could I almost appease a barb'rous Father,

And shall I not quite win a tender Husband?

What have I done? why art thou thus unkind?

Have I not been thy most obedient Wife?

O I shall ever love thee! But alas!

It needs must strike a Damp upon my Spirits,

And pall our best Enjoyments, when I think

The Man embraces me, that kill'd my Father.

Lyn. I cannot bear it. Thou hast conquer'd me.

[Puts up the Sword.]

But

82 HYPERMNESTRA: Or,

But oh!

[Sighs.

Hyperm. That Thought be buried in my Bosom.

[Embraces him.

Ægyptus his Ghost arises. Lynceus breaks from her.

Lyn. What hast thou done? See! the neglected Ghost

[To her.

Of my dear Father rises to upbraid me.

Thou must not live: *Ægyptus* bids thee dye.

[Draws.

Ghost. Mistake me not. Thy Father's Ghost forbids
Revenge, the Daughter of infernal Darkness:

Mercy is God-like, and becomes a Heroe.

[Sinks.

Lyn. Then be it so: far be't from me to oppose
So good a Father and so kind a Wife.

Live. But be gone, and with thy cruel Daughters

Leave *Argos*; for if e'er again thou't found

Within its Walls, no Man, no God shall save thee.

[Lynceus goes on, looking on *Hypermnestra*.

I cannot blame thee, Love, if weeping thus,

Thou shew thy Pity for a Father's Loss:

Yet think, oh! think thy Husband's bleeding Heart

Keeps equal Measures with thy streaming Eyes.

Retire, my Fair, and ease thy lab'ring Breast:

While I (since Heav'n thinks fit) prepare to bend

Beneath the double Weight of Grief and Empire.

Hence let the World be taught, that virtuous Love

Shall never fail to meet with Friends above.

Dan. Behold the just Effect of Pow'r abus'd!

I, who but Yesterday enjoy'd a Throne,

Was flatter'd, courted, and ador'd by all,

To-day a poor, forlorn, abandon'd Wretch,

Must

LOVE in TEARS.

83

Must wander thro' the World a Royal Beggar,
And O! too late confess my fatal Error.

In vain weak Man disputes the Laws of Fate:
The Gods at Pleasure will new Kings create.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]



EPI-



EPILOGUE.

Intended to be spoken by Mrs. Prince.

NO more let Man the tender Sex arraign;
No more the Fair with black Reproaches stain:
You've seen To-night a faithful, loving Wife
Expose her own, to save a Husband's Life.
In vain a Father sues, her Sisters yield,
And Heav'n resists; great Love maintains the Field.
Equal to Lynceus had his Brothers prov'd,
Like Hypermnestra all the Maids had lov'd.
Some secret Crime must needs o'er Love prevail:
Our Women seldom first in Duty fail.
Were that the Case——I fear my giddy Rage,
In the same Act, would my rash Hand engage.
But should a Youth, fair, valiant, just, and true,
Sue for my Favour, and my Heart subdue;
If he, like Linceus, still to please me strove,
I should another Hypermnestra prove,
And urge ten thousand Deaths to save my Love.

F I N I S.